

The Albion Pleiad



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Dual Degrees of Love: Faculty Couples Spotlight



The Albion College logo sports pink and red coloring with a cupid flying through the letter "O." On Albion College's campus, there are a variety of faculty and staff couples (Illustration by Killian Altayeb).

Killian Altayeb
News/Sports Editor

When it comes to faculty and staff couples, Albion College boasts a rich tapestry of pairings, each with distinct love stories that go beyond academic pursuits.

Two of these couples, who discovered love before joining Albion, manage both their personal and professional lives as a team on campus. These pairings serve as a reminder of maintaining a commitment to both a partner and a career simultaneously.

Karen Erlandson and Cliff Harris, communications and chemistry professors



Professors Karen Erlandson and Cliff Harris pose in front of the Triton Pool in front of the Cranbrook Art Museum (Photo courtesy of Karen Erlandson).

Having crossed paths at a faculty retreat, Chemistry Professor Cliff Harris had already been employed at the college for several years when Communications Professor Karen Erlandson joined the faculty.

As the only current faculty couple not both employed in the same department, Erlandson said she thinks it makes for a very different experience compared to others.

"We're in totally separate buildings, and we're in different parts of campus," Erlandson said. "I think it's nice because we both understand each other's job, and we have a lot of similar colleagues, so we have a lot of shared experiences."

Erlandson also acknowledged the rarity of both obtaining a doctorate and securing tenure-track positions at the same institution.

"I also think we got lucky because the number of people that get a Ph.D. is small. The number of people that get tenure track jobs is even smaller. For two people to be able to get a perfect job and get tenure in the same place is pretty unusual," Erlandson said.

Further acknowledging the differences between their roles on campus, Erlandson said that they've both made efforts over the years to understand each other's subjects. For Erlandson, that's meant sitting in on the odd chemistry lecture; for Harris, it's meant refreshing his communication skills.

Erlandson said that she's grateful that working for Albion College allowed her and

her husband to meet.

"I think it's a joy having him here in the same place to work with me. I like him a lot, and I know I sound so cheesy, but it's true," Erlandson said.

Carrie Menold and Mick McRivette, geology professors



Professors Carrie Menold and Mick McRivette pose in Yosemite National Park. Both professors work in the geology department at Albion College (Photo courtesy of Carrie Menold).

Geology Professors Carrie Menold and Mick McRivette met in 2003 when McRivette gained admission to UCLA. While neither of them had received their doctorates, Menold was three years ahead in her academic pursuits.

Despite their differences, they solidified their compatibility during a research trip.

"We did our research in Tibet, in China and he was my field assistant that summer. It was three months in the middle of nowhere, and we were still together by the end of it," Menold said.

Both are now employed in Albion College's geology department. Menold said their shared graduate school experience primed them for working in close proximity.

"From the very beginning of our relationship, we've always worked together. His

specialty is different than mine, but being in the same department means collaborating in the same environment," Menold said.

Despite sharing a workspace on many occasions, the couple has made an effort to maintain a clear distinction between their home and work lives, attributing their success to establishing boundaries.

"I think once you're at home, you have to draw a few invisible boundaries, right? I think you have to sort of just be mindful of what's going on," Menold said.

Both professors make an effort to prioritize their family when home, even with the ever-present tasks of grading and teaching. Amid these circumstances though, they share a mutual understanding of what it's like being a professor.

The couple acknowledged Albion College's positive environment as a contributing factor to their success and the success of other couples.

"You find more couples at liberal arts colleges because they seem more open to the idea that you can get some benefit by working with your spouse," Menold said. "There are some nice things, I think, that happen, like living in town and our son being able to know our students."

"It's a joy having him here in the same place to work with me. I like him a lot, and I know I sound so cheesy, but it's true."

In reflecting on their journey, Menold said, "sometimes you just need to embrace love and not worry about whether it's like what you imagined. Sometimes you just find your person. It is not exactly what you imagined, but it's just as good as you hoped."

Killian Altayeb has a major in the chemistry department.

Opinion: Grindr and Uhails; the Do's and Don'ts of Queer Dating

Hannah Fathman

Co-Marketing Coordinator/Volunteer Staff Writer

Dating men has always seemed relatively straightforward to me. Blame my passion for acting or simple disinterest in men, but the rules to straight dating have always been easy to follow.

However, there's not the same kind of clear layout for queer dating.

For many people, queer dating was something to be hushed up and never spoken of. This lack of exposure can lead to fear and stereotypes dominating many queer people's view of dating.

I personally didn't meet an openly queer adult until I came to college, and had no examples of what to do when dating someone who wasn't a man.

My first dates with women were terrifying, both because I was fighting through shame and internalized homophobia every second of the way and because I was only taught and exposed to the strict roles straight people were "supposed to" play.

I found, pretty quickly, that the way I presented at the time pushed me into the traditional "male roles" in the relationship.

It wasn't until I was comfortable enough with my sexuality to drop this expected role of masculinity that I finally found fulfilling queer relationships.

So, from the young adults who figured it out on their own – and are still at it – here's a quick list of what to do and what not to do when entering the queer dating world.

Don't be scared of using dating apps

Many people associate dating apps with several negative attributes, such as superficiality and fickleness. While this may be true in



The author, Hamilton junior Hannah Fathman, and Orion Hower, Columbus senior, play cards and drink wine during Albion College Theatre's production of Stop Kiss in the spring semester of 2023. The play follows the story of two young women who fall in love with one another (Photo illustration courtesy of Kiah Kayser).

some regards, dating apps have proven vital to the LGBTQ+ community.

Growing up in a small town, there were very few safe queer spaces, if any. The school's Gay Straight Alliance received threats of violence, there were no non-religious parts of town and even the theatre department was populated with homophobic students and leaders.

There are fewer than two dozen lesbian bars in the United States; even if I did live near one, that's not much use to an 18-year-old.

For young people in a similar situation, dating apps offer a safer alternative to going out on the town – especially when that town is homophobic.

Luke Rivard, Wilson senior and gay man,

shared his thoughts on various dating apps.

"For gay people, it's often safer," Rivard said. "I'd recommend it for someone who's scared of physical violence and verbal violence"

Jay Weekley, Lake Villa junior and non-binary person, said that they recommend using dating apps as well.

"I've only used Hinge," Weekley said. "It's pretty inclusive."

Inclusive it is; Hinge has open gender options, as well as 23 sexuality options. In comparison, Tinder has nine sexuality options.

Willow Incense, a queer senior at Albion, who is concealing her name for her protection, said she's also had positive experiences with dating apps.

"I was on Bumble for a bit, I also had Tinder for a little while," Incense said, adding that she "met some really cool women" on these apps.

Besides Hinge and Bumble, the apps Taimi, Grindr and HER have been rated as some of the most LGBTQ+ friendly apps.

Caleb Galvin, Hazelwood, Minn. sophomore and gay man, has a different perspective on dating apps, yet still recognizes their necessity.

"I feel like sometimes it's hard to like, find queer people. I fall into the resources that we do have," Galvin said. "Which are sometimes, sadly, dating apps."

Do know what to expect from them

Galvin, Rivard and Weekley all agreed on one thing: Dating apps introduce a culture of inauthenticity.

"It's like we're shopping," Rivard said. "I think it goes both ways, there's safety but there's also superficiality."

Studies have shown that people from different dating apps typically are looking for different types of relationships.

"I've never been like, 'oh, I'm seeking for love on this app,'" Galvin said of using Tinder. "It's more just for experience, or talking to people."

In my experience of being on the queer women and gender non-conforming – or often called sapphic – side of Tinder, I've experienced quite the opposite.

Apart from the occasional unicorn hunter, it was difficult for me to match with people who didn't want to talk about marriage on the first date.

Continued on back.

Opinion: The Do’s and Don’ts of Queer Dating



Fathman and Hower’s hands reach for the same book in the Albion Theatre Library. Bookstores are a famously popular meet-up location amongst queer people (Photo illustration by Hannah Fathman).

Continued from front.

Don’t try to fit expectations

Without examples of queer dating, it’s easy to try to conform to what straight people consider “normal.” Trying to date in a way that conforms to heteronormative standards, but doesn’t bring you joy, is only going to make you seem stiff. Do something that allows you and your date to highlight your best selves. From art museums to coffee shops, there are plenty of safe bets, especially if you know something about the other person’s interests.

“I love going to bookstores,” Incense said. “I feel like you can learn a lot about a person based on where they go in a bookstore.”

Even though queer dates offer a reprieve from heteronormative standards and allows for freedom of expression in a novel sort of way, this doesn’t mean you have to reinvent the wheel. It’s okay to want that stereotypical date experience. Rivard is a huge proponent of this.

“Dinner and a movie: I know it’s cliché and boring, but gay people can date like straight people,” Rivard said.

Weekley echoed this sentiment, suggesting a dinner and a movie.

There’s no special code to know what the right activity is; the important part is choosing something accessible that makes both you and your date comfortable and excited.

Do express yourself

Overwhelmingly, the one thing everyone agreed on was their desire for someone who shared their common interests. Listening, asking questions and sharing parts of yourself are all essential to making a good first impression.

“I like people that know about the things I like,” Rivard said.

Finding out what actually interests you, not just speculating on the other person’s interests, can help create more genuine connections.

Cass Burgess, a Fife Lake senior and pansexual transmasculine non-binary person, shares why he values self-expression on dates.

“I would say a green flag is if somebody gets really excited about talking about one of their interests to me,” Burgess said. “It makes me feel like I’m a safe person for them.

However, opening up to someone about your interests on the first date doesn’t mean you have to open up about everything.

“Trauma dumping can kinda be a turn off” Weekley said. “If it’s immediate and not really reciprocated”

It’s easy to get over excited and rush into a new relationship when you feel a connection with someone, this is relatively common in queer dating spaces. However, it’s usually not what’s best for either party.

Don’t rush it

You might’ve heard the term “uhaul lesbian” or “uhauling,” a term coined to poke fun at the quick manner lesbians and queer women move in with one another – most famously after the second date. Meeting someone, especially for the first time, who has lived life through a fundamentally more similar lens as you have can seem like compatibility.

I’ve fallen into this trap myself.

To my sapphics: your first date with a woman will likely feel like no one has ever understood you quite so intimately. Congratulations, it’s because almost any woman will have more emotional intelligence than any of the men you’ve seen.

It does not mean she’s your soulmate.

If you’re not aware and openly communicating where you’re at in your queer journey, it can risk putting you in dangerous scenarios or hurting the person you’re with.

Know what your physical boundaries are, know who you’re ready to be out to and who you’re not, be honest with yourself and your date on where you are on your sexuality-discovery journey; no one wants to find out a month into dating someone they were only “experimenting.”

Go get ‘em, tiger!

Overall, the most important things remain the same no matter who you’re dating: safety, communication and mutual respect.

If we had to find one bright side to not having proper representation, it could be that there are far fewer expectations of “the norm.” Do what makes you feel safe and happy and don’t forget your Dr. Martens.

Opinion: What to Read From a Hopeless Romantic

Rhiannon Slotnick
Staff Writer

As a child, I was always drawn to a good romance story. I was brought up on Disney Princess movies and romance animes. Growing up, “The Secret of Moonacre” was my favorite movie; my childhood self was mad that I didn’t get to see Maria Merryweather and Robin de Noir kiss on screen.

When I turned eight, I started looking for romance in books. When my mom forced me to start reading the “Thea Stilton” series, I would flip through the pages to find out if one of the main girls had gotten together with the guy introduced at the start of each book.

Then, when I started reading “My Sister’s a Vampire,” I realized I only cared about the relationship between the sisters and their boyfriends. I didn’t care about how the girls grew closer when they discovered each other after years.

Reading romance allowed my hopeless romantic heart to grow. It allowed me to

When I was younger, I only wanted to read a certain genre of books: romance or course. I never wanted to branch out because I thought books could only contain one kind of genre, not multiple. However, after reading a recommendation from a friend, “Maze Runner” by James Dashner, I decided to give science fiction and fantasy a chance.

With these books, I got to travel to new places as well as get a good love story, even if some of the relationship dynamics broke my heart:

“City of Bones,” by Cassandra Clare
“The Lunar Chronicles,” by Marissa Meyer
“The School for Good and Evil,” by Soman Chainani
“Zodiac,” by Romina Russell
“Percy Jackson and The Olympians,” by Rick Riordan
“The Fifth Wave,” by Rick Yancey
“The Hunger Games,” by Suzanne Collins
“Vampire Academy,” by Richelle Mead



The author, Detroit junior Rhiannon Slotnick, stands in front of a brick wall holding three of her favorite books. Slotnick recommends these books for anyone interested in reading more romance (Photo courtesy of Katie Dudenhoefer).

escape to a new world and live vicariously through the characters I was fascinated with. To this day, as an adult, I am constantly in search of new romance genres, subgenres and series that recapture the magic I felt during my youth.

Romance Across Genres

In this type of story, the romance is there, but it’s not the story’s overarching theme. Let’s take “Tiger’s Curse,” by Colleen Houck for example. In the book, a young girl helps to break a curse on a shape-shifting prince. While the characters do fall in love and eventually become a couple, the main goal of the story is to break the curse that turns the prince into a tiger.

Typically, these books are more action-oriented and though they are faced with tragedy, many characters in these novels are able to find love with those around them.

Tooth-Rotting Sweetness: Fluff

When I say “fluff,” I’m not talking about the filler authors use to make their stories longer. I’m talking about the sweet and tender romance books in both the Young Adult and regular Adult sections.

Many different tropes could fall under this area: enemies or friends to lovers, faking dating, love triangles and many more.

In Young Adult:

“The Selection,” by Kiera Cass (*Love Triangle*)
“To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before,” by Jenny Han (*Fake dating*)
“The Summer I Turned Pretty,” by Jenny Han (*Love Triangle*)
“My Life With The Walter Boys,” by Ali Novak (*Love Triangle*)
“Did I Mention I Love You,” by Estelle Maskame (*Enemies to Lovers/Forced Proximity*)
“Perfect Chemistry,” by Simone Elkeles (*Enemies to Lovers/Bad Boy*)
“Run Away With Me,” by Mila Gray (*Second Chance*)
“10 Things I Can See From Here,” Carrie Mac (*Strangers to Lovers*)
“Heartstopper,” by Alice Oseman (*Friends to Lovers*)
“Shatter Me,” by Tahereh Mafi (*Enemies to Lovers*)
“She Gets the Girl,” by Alyson Derrick and Rachael Lippincott (*Friends to Lovers*)

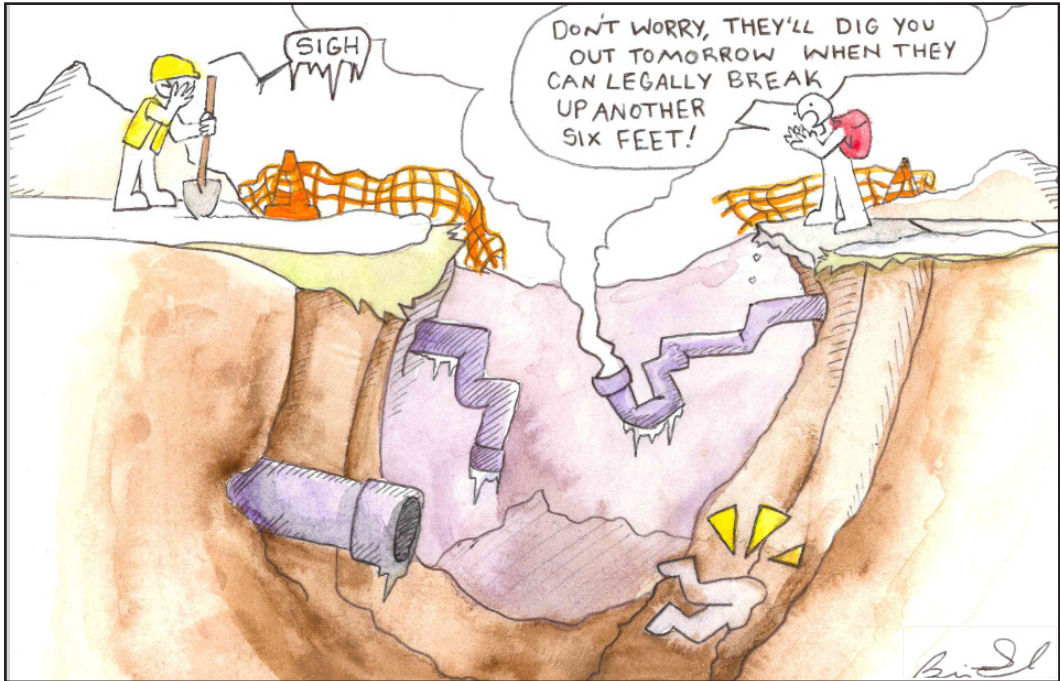
In Adult:

“Red, White & Royal Blue,” by Casey McQuiston (*Queer Royals*)
“One Last Stop,” by Casey McQuiston (*Magical Realism*)
“The Love Hypothesis,” by Ali Hazelwood (*Fake Dating*)
“Love On the Brain,” By Ali Hazelwood (*One-sided Enemies to Lovers/Forced Proximity*)
“After,” by Anna Todd (*Dare/Bad Boy*)
“Lovelight Farms,” by B.K. Borison (*Friends to Lovers*)
“Practice Makes Perfect,” by Sarah Adams (*Opposites Attract*)

Read more at albionpleiad.com

It’s A Good Thing Nobody Fell in...

Bonnie Lord
Managing Editor



A student yells to someone who fell into the hole outside of the KC, who will have to wait until facilities can dig another six feet, per Michigan law. The hole was dug on Jan. 14 to find and fix a leak in the steam line, and has since been filled (Illustration by Bonnie Lord).

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