

Ernest Wilkinson and the Transformation of BYU's Honor Code, 1965-71

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FOR THE FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS of his tenure as president of BYU (1951-65), Ernest Wilkinson was largely occupied with expanding the school's size and its academic reputation. His goal of creating the world's most important university depended, he believed, on controlling not only academic and political life for faculty, but also social life for students. He oversaw aspects of student life as minute as what music could be played on campus, what dances could be danced, what movies could be shown, and, perhaps of greatest concern, what clothes could be worn (especially by women) and what hair-styles could be sported (especially by men). Such examples of student control were largely facilitated by Wilkinson's conceptual shift from a student code of honor to what he called a "code of conduct."¹

Wilkinson's efforts to use the honor code to control student behavior began in earnest in the mid-1960s and were prompted by transformations in the larger American culture. The late 1950s and early 1960s witnessed a shift in national government from the Republicanism of the Eisenhower era to the Democratic Kennedy and Johnson administrations. National media attention shifted from the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to the civil rights movement and growing resistance to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In this climate Wilkinson began to pay as much attention to national politics as to BYU expansion. In the late 1950s he began to consider invitations to run for the U.S. senate but always con-

1. Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975-76), 3:327. The best previous treatment of BYU's honor code is Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 107-20.

cluded that he could accomplish more at BYU than in Washington, D.C.² By 1964, however, he had begun to feel at age sixty-five that his usefulness on the Provo campus was coming to an end.³ Furthermore, state and national politics seemed to be declining morally at an alarming rate. During the 1960 election season Wilkinson began to worry about the "financial solvency of our country." When Richard Nixon lost the U.S. presidential race to John F. Kennedy, Wilkinson feared that the Massachusetts senator's "socialist proposals" would bring the country to ruin.⁴ In 1964, then, Wilkinson stepped down as president to run for the senate. An ugly battle ensued, which he lost. His fears about godless government seemingly confirmed, he returned to BYU after a hiatus of less than a year,⁵ hoping to use his position at the university's helm to stem socialism's growth. For faculty members, this would mean launching in 1966 a "spy ring" to keep tabs on "liberal" faculty members;⁶ for students, it would mean stepping up "the standards crusade."⁷

"THE DECLINE ... OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC," 1965-67

For Wilkinson, the world in early 1965 seemed to be falling apart. America's attention in Vietnam had been captured by the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964. The fall election had resulted in Lyndon Johnson remaining in office. Conflict within Mormonism over civil rights (which many conservatives considered communist-controlled) led some to fear that "outside agitators" would stage a race riot in Salt Lake City during the church's fall 1965 general conference.⁸ American youth culture also seemed to be deteriorating. More disturbing to Wilkinson was what mainstream media were beginning to call "campus unrest." From the disruption of HUAC meetings by Berkeley students in 1960 to the launching of that school's Free Speech Movement in 1964, *U.S. News and World Report* had published a series of articles on student protests, each asking the

2. *Ibid.*, 179. For Wilkinson's political activity, see Gary James Bergera's two articles, "A Strange Phenomena: Ernest L. Wilkinson, the LDS Church, and Utah Politics," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Summer 1993): 89-115; and "'A Sad and Expensive Experience': Ernest L. Wilkinson's 1964 Bid for the U.S. Senate," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 61 (Fall 1993).

3. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:180.

4. The first two quotations are noted in Wilkinson's diary, 28 Apr. 1960, the second two from entries dated 8 Aug. and 9 Nov. 1960, all cited in Bergera, "A Strange Phenomena," 109.

5. On the 1964 race, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:177-90, and Bergera, "'A Sad and Expensive Experience.'"

6. On the spy ring, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:775-76; Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 207-16; and D. Michael Quinn, "Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Summer 1993): 1-87, esp. 50-55.

7. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:329.

8. Benson, in the church's April 1965 general conference, had asserted that the NAACP was communist-controlled. See Quinn, "Ezra Taft Benson," 34-35.

same question: "Are Reds to Blame?"⁹ In response, Wilkinson instituted a practice of beginning each fall semester with a "crisp statement" to all students: rioters would be expelled, no questions asked. Students unfailingly answered with a standing ovation.¹⁰

By 1965, according to Wilkinson's official history, "the dimensions of campus unrest had been broadened to include domestic racial problems, the draft, drugs, coeducational dormitories, student control of curriculum, student determination of administrative policies, the exclusion of police from college campuses, and a multitude of other issues [including] the war in Vietnam."¹¹ Believing that both "campus unrest" and Democratic party victories were signs of a looming socialist state, Wilkinson returned to BYU from his failed political venture. In May 1965, at the end of his first semester back, he delivered an apocalyptic commencement address: "The Decline and Possible Fall of the American Republic." Citing rising rates of crime, juvenile delinquency, immorality, divorce, and public welfare, he blamed these "evidences of moral decay" on the steady increase of federal power beginning with Roosevelt's New Deal and extending to Johnson's views on social security. These and other proofs (in Wilkinson's mind) of federally funded moral decline spelled the end of cherished American freedoms.

Wilkinson based his address largely on the words of Mormon leaders from Joseph Smith to the current church president and ardent cold warrior, David O. McKay. Having failed in his bid for public office, Wilkinson now sought to act on "the duty of a university president" in "times of national and world crisis ... to speak forth boldly in behalf of what he considers to be the truth." Confessing that "my generation has failed you [graduates] in preserving and strengthening the Constitution," he vowed to mail copies of his talk, along with a compendium of anti-communist "prophetic utterances," to every graduate, "with the hope that you may help stem the tide that is now engulfing our country."¹²

Preventing communism from creeping onto campus depended in large measure, for Wilkinson, on his ability to prevent student unrest. Wherever the president saw change, discontent, or challenges to authority on other campuses, he moved quickly to prevent such evils from emerging at his own school. During his first fall semester address to the

9. See "Back of San Francisco Rioting: Red Agitation," *U.S. News and World Report*, 30 May 1960, 12; "More Campus Unrest: Are Reds to Blame?" *U.S. News and World Report*, 10 May 1965, 14; "From J. Edgar Hoover: A Report on Campus Reds," *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 May 1965; all cited in Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:321-22.

10. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:323.

11. *Ibid.*, 322.

12. Wilkinson, *The Decline and Possible Fall of the American Republic*, Commencement Address, 28 May 1965 (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), quotations from pp. 11, 3, 4.

student body after returning to BYU, Wilkinson launched into the issue of student dress—a topic that would preoccupy him for the remainder of his term at BYU. While expensive clothing was discouraged on campus, Wilkinson told students, “we do expect the boys to have civilized attire, and we expect the girls to be modest and becoming in their dress.” With the Beatles and other cultural pariahs in mind, Wilkinson spent the next several minutes commenting on the state of American college fashion: “[W]e do not want on our campus any beatles, beatniks, or buzzards,” he told students, revealing his characteristically acerbic sense of humor: “We have on this campus scientists who are specialists in the control of insects, beatles, beatniks and buzzards. Usually we use chemical or biological control methods, but often we just step on them to exterminate them. For biological specimens like students, we usually send them to the Dean of Students for the same kind of treatment.”¹³ Although Wilkinson did not draw attention to men’s beards, a *Daily Universe* writer earlier in the year had noticed an increase in facial hair on campus. Wilkinson’s main concern in the fall 1965 address, though, was sloppiness in general and what he perceived as the anti-social and anti-authoritarian culture of campus unrest.

Wilkinson’s concerns regarding student dress were gender-inclusive, and carried an implicit anti-Californian bias that probably reflected the increase at BYU of California students as well as the increasingly notorious activities of Berkeley students. “As to the dress standards of women,” he told students,

we want no “go-go girls” nor their pseudo-sophisticated friends, nor will we tolerate any “surfers.” And for faculty members who are behind time on their modern high school terminology, [an administrator] informs me that a “go-go girl” is a “sexy, scantily-dressed girl,” and a “surfer” is one who is sloppily clad, often in a T-shirt or shorts, and sometimes barefooted. Indeed, it is out of place for girls to wear slacks to any class or appear in them in any academic or administrative building on campus. This includes secretaries as well.¹⁴

Wilkinson’s talk belied increasing anxiety over “control.” This emphasis stemmed from new realities for BYU. In the fall of 1965 Wilkinson no longer had to fret about recruiting students. Now, after a decade and a half in office, he had opposite worries: how to maintain individual influence over 15,000 students, and how to justify to church members the board of trustees’ imminent decision to cap enrollment. In addition, his

13. Wilkinson, “Make Honor Your Standard,” address to BYU student body, 23 Sept. 1965, in *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1965-66* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1966), 9.

14. *Ibid.*, 10.

student concerns throughout his remaining years in office centered on three broad topics: ferreting out "unworthy" students, institutionalizing student dress regulations, and increasing administrative control over student conduct code enforcement.

Keeping track of students brought with it, Wilkinson believed, another problem: facilitating social intercourse among a large student body. To deal with these challenges, beginning in the fall of 1965 he sought to require students to wear name badges on campus. The proposal met with resistance, but Wilkinson brought up the topic perennially. In 1966 he even spent \$6,000 on over 20,000 name tags, though Dean of Students J. Elliot Cameron reported that student reaction was "very negative" and that "approximately 90 percent would not wear the name tages [sic] even for their ward functions." Based on such a dismal response, Cameron begged Wilkinson to drop the matter the following year. Instead, he told the president, students could wear tags "during orientation and registration periods," serving "to identify [them] when you shake hands with them."¹⁵ Two years later Wilkinson pursued the idea again, suggesting that "why don't we get a real ritzy name plate and charge students for it—say 50¢ a piece. ... Sometimes people appreciate much more thing[s] for which they pay."¹⁶ Much to his disappointment, the plan never materialized.

The anxiety Wilkinson felt as he became less and less personally involved with students was manifested in another campaign from the late 1960s: an attempt to have campus church leaders identify and help root out problem students. In order to preserve the "worthiness" of the student body (especially in the face of an increasing number of parents who asked why their children were not enrolled), Wilkinson took steps, beginning in 1966, to require bishops of prospective students to provide information about an applicant's activity in and attitudes toward the LDS church. In a memorandum to school trustees, Wilkinson explained that the proposed "questionnaire"—not a recommend, he stressed—for bishops "would probably ask somewhat the same questions as are asked for a temple recommend, together with other questions thought suitable for students." A similar attempt had been made two decades previously, he explained, but received opposition from bishops who "thought sending youngsters to the BYU was a way to reform them." Wilkinson wanted to attempt a pilot program in the 1967 school year, then send the questionnaire to bishops generally before the fall 1968 school year.¹⁷

15. Wilkinson to Cameron, 21 Dec. 1965; Cameron to Wilkinson, 31 Apr. 1967, from which the quotations are taken. Copies of these and all other unpublished manuscript materials, unless otherwise noted, are in my possession.

16. Wilkinson to Ben E. Lewis and J. Elliot Cameron, 28 July 1967; Wilkinson to Lewis and Cameron, 29 July 1969.

17. Wilkinson, "Memorandum for Board of Trustees," 31 Oct. 1966.

Wilkinson also undertook a similar course to identify problem students who had already been admitted. In early 1967 the administration received board approval to ask stake presidents and bishops to name students with poor church activity or other potential problems. Wilkinson was annoyed to find campus bishops resistant to the request: on 8 March he confided defensively to his diary that "stake presidents [had been] alarmed over a letter that had been sent out by the First Presidency, which was meeting vigorous opposition from the bishops." Bishops had assumed "that we were going to take disciplinary action against certain students," he wrote, "when all we wanted it for was informational purposes."¹⁸ The following month the proposal met some opposition from faculty as well. Wilkinson reported on the project at a faculty meeting, saying that "if students are not living the standards of the university and the Church they should not be permitted to remain in the school and prevent worthy members of the Church from attending." One faculty member said he "felt the administration should make it clear that the bishops are not to reveal information on students who have come to them in confidence." Wilkinson and Cameron admitted they had not worked out an answer to that problem. While bishops might not reveal specific details to administrators, Wilkinson said, "if they have been informed of a student's inactivity or inability to live the standards of the church by another source they are to reveal this to the University administration." The university "must sustain the Board of Trustees in carrying out this policy in the best manner possible," he told faculty members.¹⁹ (What he did not tell them, of course, was that the idea was originally his.)

In response to the request for information, bishops reported a total of 125 problem students prior to the fall 1967 semester. Contrary to Wilkinson's diary entry in which he claimed only "informational" interest in such a list, the students were prevented from registering for the new semester. The students would be informed that they had to meet with Dean Cameron or another university official. "It is expected that some of these students," the dean of admissions wrote to Cameron, "would exhibit a willingness to conform to B.Y.U. standards and would be permitted to register; others will not be permitted to register."²⁰

Another measure Wilkinson took beginning in 1966 was to institutionalize regulations on student clothing. While women in particular had experienced restrictions on what they could wear on campus,²¹ these

18. Wilkinson Diary, 8 Mar. 1967.

19. Faculty Meeting Minutes, 20 Apr. 1967, UA 560, University Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter BYUA).

20. William R. Siddoway to J. Elliot Cameron, 1 Sept. 1967.

21. For a discussion of the gendered origins of BYU's dress and grooming standards, see Bryan Waterman and Brian Kagel, *The Lord's University: Freedom and Authority at BYU* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), chap. 2.

standards had for the most part been set by churchwide publications, most recently the 1965 pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*. The informal policy that women wear dresses on campus had never been rigorously challenged, but as student fashions moved toward shorter skirts Wilkinson began dictating what constituted an appropriate dress. In an October 1966 devotional, he referred students to *For the Strength of Youth*, which advised that "[i]t is difficult to make an overall statement concerning modest standards of dress, because modesty cannot be determined by inches or fit since that which looks modest on one person may not be so on another." For Wilkinson, though, this prescription was no longer specific enough, and he provided more detailed guidelines: "Skirts should be long enough to cover the knee cap," he said, "and they should not be too tight fitting. Dresses should not be cut extremely low at the top. Strapless dresses and spaghetti straps are not acceptable. ... Pants for young women are not desirable attire for shopping, school, ... or restaurants. ... Shorts may be worn [only] during actual participation in active sports." At dances, he said, men "should wear a suit with dress shirt and tie [or] a sports jacket, or dressy sweater ... [at] more casual dances."²² *For the Strength of Youth* also indicated that "young men's hair should not be too long."

Controversy over BYU's orally transmitted dress standards first erupted a few months later when, in early December, staff in the Wilkinson Center were instructed to enforce "dress standards" in the bowling alley and hobby shop. Lyle Curtis, director of the student center, told the *Universe* that his employees would turn away "coeds ... unless they were wearing dresses." For those working on crafts projects, he continued, they had "developed a mother-hubbard type of apron ... [to] protect the ladies' clothing as they work."²³ Two days later the paper reported that the student government's executive council had voted "unanimously ... [to oppose] the Wilkinson Center's 'no slacks' policy, and appointed a three-man committee to appeal the issue with the Administration Dress Standards officials."²⁴ Within a few weeks the student body president, Lynn Southam, and the administration's student coordinator released a joint statement announcing that "the Dress Standards Committee of BYU has decided to allow girls to wear slacks on the lower floor" of the Wilkinson Center. In addition, student officers recommended the appointment of a new Dress Standards Committee—one that included students.²⁵

Perhaps because students claimed victory in allowing women to

22. Quoted in *Daily Universe*, 13 Oct. 1966.

23. "ELWC—No Slacks Is Absolute Policy," *Daily Universe*, 13 Dec. 1966.

24. "Student Reaction: Council Too," *Daily Universe*, 15 Dec. 1966.

25. "Standards Committee Okays Girls in Slacks," *Daily Universe*, 3 Jan. 1967.

bowl in slacks, Wilkinson stepped up his argument that BYU women were not welcome on campus generally unless they wore dresses of appropriate length. Mini-skirts, in his mind, were as scandalous as pants: one was too erotic, the other too masculine. "It is out of place on this campus for girls to wear slacks in any class, or mini-skirts anywhere," he told students as classes reconvened in September 1967. "Last week I saw only one girl on this campus with a mini-skirt and she didn't have anything to show."²⁶

That year Wilkinson launched his first attempt to remove administration of the honor code from student control. In January, the same month that student leaders claimed victory in the Wilkinson Center "no slacks" controversy, the student Honor Council announced it was surrendering its "authority to impose disciplinary measures" to the administration-controlled Academic Standards and University Standards committees. (The division between the two administrative committees also signaled the separation in the honor code between cheating issues and behavioral standards associated with dress, sex, and Word of Wisdom matters.) A year earlier student leaders had been told that failing to yield their authority in these areas would result in a wholly revised honor code system with no input from students. The student Honor Council's new functions would be strictly educational.²⁷

In November students learned of the change in honor code administration and that the code itself had been revised, most notably to include a proscription against "possession, dispensing, and/or use" of illegal narcotics. Tag Taggart, chair of the student Honor Council, said that copies of the new code would be made available to students shortly.²⁸ The same day that the *Universe* reported these changes, the student newspaper also ran an in-house editorial protesting the fact that students had not voted on the revisions. An administration-enforced policy, editors felt, removed the concept of "honor" from the honor code.²⁹

Over the next several weeks students struggled to understand the implications of the new system. In an article explaining the administration's approach to discipline, one student journalist noted that students reported to the Standards Office would be called in and asked about the truth of the charges. "If the accusation is denied," the reporter explained, "the person making the charges is requested to supply proof." Even if the evidence against a student is overwhelming, the article continued, there "is always an avenue of escape" for the wrongly accused: "This is the polygraph, or 'lie detector' test, which is administered by Captain Swen

26. Robert Goodrich, "Wilkinson Voices Standards," *Daily Universe*, 22 Sept. 1967.

27. See Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 118-19.

28. "Honor Code Revised," *Daily Universe*, 17 Nov. 1967.

29. "Keep Honor in the Code," *Daily Universe*, 17 Nov. 1967.

C. Nielsen of [Campus] Security. While the test ... would not be admitted as evidence in a courtroom, it is accepted by BYU."³⁰

Concerns about the new honor code at the end of 1967 were not limited to students. Faculty members learned in December that a revision of the *University Handbook* subjected teachers, for the first time, to the same honor code provisions required of students. The development led to an explosive faculty meeting mid-month, when several professors charged that placing faculty under a regulated code of behavior demonstrated an unmistakable lack of confidence and respect. Teachers demanded to vote on the measure. The *Universe* reported that the "meeting erupted into a heated, emotional debate, ending in abrupt adjournment." Academic Vice President Robert K. Thomas, who was in charge, announced he would never again chair a faculty meeting. Refusing to accept further motions, according to the news report, he "called on a faculty member for the benediction and adjourned the meeting."³¹

FROM HONOR CODE TO CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT, 1968-69

The controversies over the administration's takeover of the honor code continued through the entire next year. It became clear in early 1968 that part of the reason Wilkinson wanted to revamp honor code procedures was an increase of drug use among students. Following the arrest of five undergraduates on marijuana charges in January, Wilkinson issued a statement that students arrested for drug use or possession would be automatically suspended. Dean Cameron explained the decision to the *Universe*, arguing that the arrest itself was sufficient cause for disciplinary action. "The suspended student, if found not guilty," the *Universe* noted, would still have "no possibility of getting credit for the semester's classes. He would have to register and repeat everything" after appealing the suspension.³²

In response, defense attorneys for the five students protested that suspending students on a presumption of guilt was unfair. Further, they claimed BYU security officers had used "gestapo tactics" by relying on undercover campus police and student informers to encourage other students to use drugs. In a *Universe* article reporting the attorneys' claims, Cameron retracted his previous statement and said that the university would, in the future, deal with disciplinary cases individually.³³ However, the five students were still suspended on the basis of their arrests.

30. Charlotte Antrei, "University Standards is More than Just Discipline," *Daily Universe*, 4 Dec. 1967.

31. "Faculty Boils Over," *Daily Universe*, 15 Dec. 1967.

32. Larry Wright, "Dean Affirms Arrest Means Suspension," *Daily Universe*, 1 Feb. 1968.

33. Larry Wright, "Defense Attorneys Blast Suspensions," *Daily Universe*, 2 Feb. 1968.

According to the students, no one from the school ever talked to them about the incident and they were not allowed to defend themselves to University Standards officials.³⁴

Some students reacted angrily to these actions. "Someone should inform Dean Cameron that the present year is 1968 and not 1984," one student wrote to the *Universe*.³⁵ One of the newspaper's writers even asked the administration: "Is it gratifying in some way to sit in your offices and act out the roles of the judge and the jury? Do you find it rewarding to pronounce judgment in cases that have not yet gone to court? ... I cannot believe that you are so blind to the concepts of due process of law that you would presume guilt until these students are proven innocent."³⁶ *Universe* editors also entered the fray, complaining that the "new code has never been presented to the student body for discussion and acceptance and is technically only the responsibility of those students who have entered the school since it was adopted."³⁷

Though Wilkinson's November revisions to the honor code did not yet formalize "dress standards," he continued in 1968 to call attention to student dress regulations and to move toward their institutionalization. In response to his continued reliance on the church's *For the Strength of Youth*, one student challenged: "When did neckties and short hair become the fullest expressions of western civilization?"³⁸ In March Wilkinson launched what was perhaps his most notorious—and most resisted—dress standards campaign. The *Daily Universe* quoted the guidelines from *For the Strength of Youth*: "skirts should be long enough to cover the knee-cap."³⁹ Wilkinson then called attention to the stricter language by requiring Wilkinson Center employees to distribute handouts with the slogan "Pardon Me" on the front to female students whose skirts were too short. "In order to spare you embarrassment," the 8½-by-3-inch pamphlet informed violators, "we give you this folder to remind and inform you of dress standards at BYU because we do not want you to feel out of place on our campus. If you are a student this will renew the dress standards you agreed to accept when you registered." The handout instructed women not to wear skirts above the knee, pant dresses, shorts, slacks, "pedal pushers," sweat shirts, bare feet, or culottes (unless they were dress length). Men were informed they should not wear sandals without socks, sweat shirts, cut-offs, bermuda shorts, gym clothes, or bare feet.

Students responded with immediate resistance. Women, the *Universe*

34. "A Good Plan," *Daily Universe*, 8 Feb. 1968.

35. Joseph Naylor to the editor, *Daily Universe*, 5 Feb. 1968.

36. Judy E. Geissler, "The Firing Line," *Daily Universe*, 6 Feb. 1968.

37. "Know the Honor Code," *Daily Universe*, 6 Feb. 1968.

38. Howard Palmer to the editor, *Daily Universe*, 23 Feb. 1968.

39. "Campus Dress Standards," *Daily Universe*, 14 Mar. 1968.

reported, competed for clever comebacks to "Pardon Me" distributors, including "Does your wife realize you're doing this?" "Masher!" "Jealous?" and "You know what you can do with that."⁴⁰ Another *Universe* article explained that the campaign had been engineered by the administration of the Wilkinson Center, although the brochures carried the name of the student government's dress standards committee. The Wilkinson Center's business manager, though, noted that the center had taken the project out from under student government supervision because the student group "was not doing a good job" enforcing standards.⁴¹ The *Universe* proved to be one of the program's most vocal critics. The paper printed clip-and-save coupons for students to hand back to campaign administrators: "You're Not Pardoned."⁴² An editorial a few days later claimed "'Pardon Me' Not Valid" because, though the student dress committee had ostensibly approved the pamphlet for publication, it had not authored it. The same day, student body president Paul Gilbert announced that new copies of *For The Strength of Youth* had arrived from Salt Lake City and now included the more general recommendation that dresses be of "modest length." The article noted that female students had been turned away from a Friday night dance and from using the Wilkinson Center's elevators on Saturday for wearing skirts that were too short. Gilbert said the new church pamphlets would supersede the "Pardon Me" campaign, and that no more "Pardon Me" brochures would be distributed.⁴³

In March 1968 Wilkinson also moved forward with his plan to tighten admission standards based on prospective students' attitudes toward the LDS church. In preparation for fall admissions, he sent bishops a letter explaining a new confidential form to assess applicants' moral character. The impetus for the new recommendation form, he said, was the board's recent decision to cap enrollment at 20,000. "[I]t would be unfair to admit a student," Wilkinson wrote,

who does not observe the proper moral and spiritual standards, even though he has a high academic record, for, with our limited enrollment, this would probably mean the exclusion of a student who does live the proper standards, but whose scholastic qualifications may not be quite as high. In this troubled world we believe that character is even more important than scholarship, although at the BYU we require both and want to accommodate just as many of our fine young men and women as our facilities admit.

40. "'Pardon Me' Pamphlet Raises Coed Protests," *Daily Universe*, 15 Mar. 1968.

41. "Dangerous Booklet," *Daily Universe*, 15 Mar. 1968.

42. *Ibid.*

43. "No More 'Pardon Me' Slips," *Daily Universe*, 18 Mar. 1968.

In response to criticisms that such a recommendation violated "the confidential nature of a bishop's relationship with his ward members," Wilkinson said that "an instance where there has been a confession and repentance" need not be reported. In keeping with this claim, two of the recommendation questions (regarding the Word of Wisdom and sexual morality) asked only about "unresolved" problems. Other questions, though, asked for *any* knowledge of infractions on the applicant's part, suggesting where Wilkinson's deepest concerns probably lay: drugs and narcotics, acts of civil disobedience, and violation of "the laws of the land," in particular. The form also asked bishops to read and discuss the honor code with applicants and to assess their attitude toward keeping it.⁴⁴

In April campus attention returned again to Wilkinson's anti-drug measures when some of the students suspended earlier in the semester were found not guilty of drug possession in court. According to Wilkinson, they would not, however, be readmitted, since he still considered their arrests in themselves a sign that they had violated the honor code.⁴⁵

Later that month the controversy surrounding Wilkinson's revisions of the honor code resumed when the new code was printed in the 1968-70 course catalogue. That the code was included without having been submitted to students for approval infuriated some student government officials. The *Universe* protested in a cautious editorial: "Although we don't believe it is the case," editors wrote, "it looks like the Administration is trying to put something over on the student body."⁴⁶ In an article the next day, Student Honor Council chair Tag Taggart explained that "the code in the '68-'70 Catalogue of Courses is the one we're being held responsible for. I must emphasize, though," he added, "that it's not because that's what the Student Honor Council wants, but rather because that's what the Administration decided." Taggart added that the new code had not been put to a vote because the Student Honor Council opposed the revisions and had been attempting to reach a compromise with the administration. A *Universe* columnist also reported that Taggart said he "feels like the administration is using the code as a means to punish students, rather than as a vehicle to improve students. ... Possibly one of the biggest offenders is the Office of Standards, which has frequently violated students' rights along with its own professional integrity. How? It is a well known fact that, although a student is told upon entering the Office of Standards that what he says is confidential, this often ain't what happens."⁴⁷ For the most part the code paralleled Wilkinson's November

44. Wilkinson to "Dear Bishop," Mar. 1968; "Brigham Young University Confidential Report on Candidate for Admission."

45. "Does the Court Rule the Y?" *Daily Universe*, 10 Apr. 1968.

46. "Honor Code Not Honorable," *Daily Universe*, 29 Apr. 1968.

47. Judy Geissler, "Honor Code Explained," *Daily Universe*, 30 Apr. 1968.

1967 revisions, with a few notable exceptions. A lengthy preamble noted that "[w]e believe in being an ensign of proper conduct to the entire world," which required a clear set of expectations based on "Church standards." The phrase "high moral standards" from previous incarnations of the code had been changed to "virtue and sexual purity."

Resistance from the student honor council to the honor code in the new course catalogue was so acute that Dean Cameron formed a committee of himself, four other administrators, and six students to draft a new "BYU Code of Student Conduct," adopted on 21 May 1968. The result, though, was hardly the setback Wilkinson experienced at his board of trustees meeting that June. Rather, the new code set was the most rigorous and detailed in the university's history, containing fifteen requirements, the violation of any of which could result in "expulsion or suspension." The punishable violations were:

- * Failure to live the high moral standards of the Church ... including observance of the law of chastity;
- * Dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information;
- * Forgery, [or] ... alteration ... of University ... records ;
- * Obstruction or disruption of ... University activities;
- * Physical abuse;
- * Theft;
- * Unauthorized entry;
- * Vandalism;
- * Violation of University policies concerning ... student organizations;
- * Use, possession or distribution of narcotic or other dangerous drugs;
- * Violation of rules governing residence in University-owned housing;
- * Disorderly, lewd, indecent, obscene or otherwise illegal or immoral conduct;
- * Failure to comply with directions of University officials;
- * Failure to adhere to University standards of dress; and
- * Use of tea, coffee, alcoholic beverages, or tobacco in any form.

The statement also included a provision that "The President of the University may clarify any disciplinary policy by publishing and announcing such clarification to the studentbody."

In response to the changes, Brian Zemp, who had succeeded Tag Taggart as chair of the ASBYU Honor Council, lamented, "There is no longer an Honor Code at BYU." Zemp also emphasized that the new code had eliminated one of the most controversial of Wilkinson's earlier revisions:

an injunction for students to "take appropriate action if a violation of the Honor Code is observed"—meaning, as many understood it, that students were supposed to turn each other in if they were aware of inappropriate behavior.⁴⁸

In response to Zemp's suggestion that BYU no longer had an honor code, Cameron issued a statement within a few days explaining that while "[i]t is true that the old Honor Code has been replaced by [a] Code of Student Conduct which student officers and faculty members helped to draft," students should realize that the "new Code of Student Conduct, however, replaces and becomes an honor code because each student who enrolls at the University agrees to abide by this Code of Student Conduct." Further, he argued, the "statement which appears on the application for admission stated that students will take appropriate action when they observe a violation of the code. This appropriate action has traditionally meant that students would report violations of the code."⁴⁹

With increasing frequency, "student conduct" was conflated in many students' and administrators' minds with "dress and grooming standards." The most widely debated dress-and-grooming topic in the fall of 1968 regarded beards on men, which Wilkinson was coming to identify (along with what he considered general sloppiness) with the countercultural element on other campuses and at the center of the anti-war movement. In August Wilkinson had written a letter to parents of entering freshmen that broached, in part, the issue of facial hair for male students. "While there can be no objection to a properly trimmed mustache—and there is surely nothing morally wrong with wearing a beard," he wrote, "we would prefer our young men to be clean-shaven and to keep their hair cut. We are living in an age," he added, "when shaving is so convenient that there is no need to imitate our grandfathers' facial foliage." Noting that the school had received criticism the previous year for the appearance of some bearded students, he added: "At this institution we must resist even the appearance, not only of evil, but also of the emulation of undesirable contemporary characters. We suggest that being clean shaven and having your hair properly cut is not too great a price for you to pay to further the reputation of this studentbody."⁵⁰ Wilkinson repeated the advice in his opening address to students.⁵¹ The discouragement of beards would likely have raised a larger protest among students if the Associated Press had not misreported Wilkinson's letter to parents as an outright ban on beards. Wary of the bad press such a story was sure

48. Judy Geissler, "No Y Honor Code," *Daily Universe*, 30 Sept. 1968.

49. "Honor Code Is Not Totally Replaced," *Daily Universe*, 2 Oct. 1968.

50. Quoted in "Sounding Board," *Daily Universe*, 12 Nov. 1968.

51. Wilkinson, "Welcome Address," 26 Sept. 1968, in *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1968-69* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1969), 16.

to generate, trustees quickly authorized a press release to clarify that Wilkinson's advice was not binding and that neatly trimmed beards were permissible. At the same meeting of the board, however, Wilkinson received instructions from church leaders to continue his campaign to eliminate mini-skirts and to encourage male students to remain clean-shaven and keep their hair short.⁵²

The clarification that beards were not forbidden, and that Wilkinson's attempted discouragement had been advisory only, freed students to grow beards. In fact, on 4 October the *Universe* observed that "since the administration's statement that beards are permissible, if neatly kept, more and more whiskers have appeared on campus."⁵³ A few days earlier a front-page photograph in the *Universe* of three bearded professors had so irked Wilkinson that he instructed them to shave.⁵⁴ Following the incident, reports began to surface that bearded students were being called into University Standards and strongly encouraged to shave.⁵⁵ By the end of November, administrators had voted to make long hair a punishable offense for male students.⁵⁶

In February 1969 Wilkinson happily recorded that campus stake presidents and bishops were beginning to come around to his vision of rooting out problem students and eliminating the use of BYU as a reformatory. He had entreated their cooperation, "in particular methods of eliminating students who do not fit into the culture of BYU so that those [who] would get into it might be admitted to the institution."⁵⁷ In a talk delivered in April to the same body only a hint of anxiety remained surrounding his request for information from bishops about prospective and current students: "the only matter that is strictly confidential between a bishop and a member of his ward," he told them, "is a confession. ... All other knowledge that you have can, with propriety, be shared with us."⁵⁸

While he felt more confident in enlisting the help of local church leaders, he continued to pursue individual cases with characteristic vigilance. At a swimming meet in February, for example, the attentive president noticed "two fellows with long, shaggy hair and otherwise unkempt appearances" who, when they became aware of Wilkinson, "started poking fun in my direction." He had "the person at the door get their names," then sent them to Dean Cameron with a request that he look into

52. BYU Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 4 Sept. 1968.

53. "Bearded or Bare," *Daily Universe*, 4 Oct. 1968.

54. "Sounding Board," *Daily Universe*, 16 Oct. 1968.

55. Charles K. Firmage and Pierre Hathaway, "Sounding Board," *Daily Universe*, 12 Nov. 1968.

56. J. Elliot Cameron, Weekly Minutes, 27 Nov. 1968, cited in Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:330n66.

57. Wilkinson Diary, 26 Feb. 1969.

58. Wilkinson, "Speech to Stake Presidents and Bishops," 3 Apr. 1969.

their backgrounds, academic performance, and church activity before they met the next week. Cameron's copy of the memo is covered with the information he retrieved over the next several days: both students were from "Berkly [sic], Calif.," he noted, and both were LDS. One was a "questionable scholar—should have been on probation." He reported their GPAs, their addresses, their bishop's name, and comments from others who lived or had lived with them: a former roommate, for example, moved out of their apartment, citing an "unwholesome atmosphere."⁵⁹

Nationwide, the spring of 1969 was one of unprecedented campus upheaval: 300 American colleges and universities that season witnessed "sizable demonstrations," according to one history of the era, "a quarter of them marked by strikes or building takeovers, a quarter more by disruption of classes and administration, a fifth accompanied by bombs, arson, or the trashing of property." Campus unrest was a particular fixation of the national media, paralleling daily reports from Vietnam. "Rare was the day," the same historian writes, "when the major newspapers failed to devote at least an entire page to tracking its fever chart."⁶⁰ In this context Wilkinson and BYU were to some degree celebrated among the conservative establishment. (In July 1970, for example, he would address conservative business, government, and educational leaders at the annual Bohemian Club retreat in San Francisco, and be introduced as the man whose campus had not seen a single demonstration.⁶¹) In May 1969 Wilkinson must have felt some sense of gratification when the *Chicago Tribune* editorialized that "it is refreshing to take a look at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah ... [where the] students are clean-cut. The hippie look is almost non-existent. Students stand when the 'Star Spangled Banner' is played. The ROTC is respected and growing." Discipline was upheld without protest, the paper continued, suggesting "a respect for authority and tradition that is rapidly disappearing at other institutions with vastly more years behind them."⁶² Earlier in the year *U.S. News and World Report* had made a similar assessment.⁶³

Despite such glowing reports from sources he admired, Wilkinson still found some resistance among trustees to his hard-line approach. In April he recorded that the board's executive committee was "torn be-

59. Wilkinson to Cameron, 21 Feb. 1969.

60. Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 343.

61. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:324-35.

62. "A Helpful Tip from Utah," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 May 1969, quoted in Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:327-28.

63. "A University without Trouble," *U.S. News and World Report*, 20 Jan. 1969, 55-59, cited in Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:328n62.

tween themselves as to whether we should be somewhat lenient of the conduct of the students or whether we should be more severe." While he felt confident that he and the board agreed on the standards under consideration, "the application," he wrote, "is always more difficult than the formulation of the policy."⁶⁴ He recorded a similar frustration the following month at the apparent contradiction in holding up BYU as a model for church behavior, while leaders held back from refusing temple attendance to church members whose appearance did not accord with the standards required at the university—particularly regarding hair length for men.⁶⁵

As he prepared for battle the following fall, Wilkinson attended to legal details as well. Writing in May to Dean Cameron, he noted that there "will be some students who will vigorously resent that they cannot return to the campus" and that the school's legal research needed to be thorough in preparation "so that we will be completely protected."⁶⁶ Later in the month, a letter of complaint from a parent whose daughter had bemoaned the school's "lack of enforcement of standards" prompted Wilkinson to write Cameron again: "As soon as we get through graduation," he mused, "I think we need to outline our program for next year. I am sure we have got to tighten up on our dress standards[.]" Part of his concern stemmed from his perception that some students felt that the new code had been imposed on them. "I approved the Code of Conduct," he wrote, "and while it was in a sense approved by the students"—since students had been present on the committee that drafted it—"the students do not feel it was a Student Code and I think we should take some action to let them know that they are in on it."⁶⁷

That summer Cameron reported back to Wilkinson on their efforts to receive lists of questionable students from campus bishops. A total of 137 names had been collected, some of whom Cameron had already investigated. Those with whom no contact had been made had their records "tagged" prior to fall registration, and Cameron was preparing, he said, to send them all letters requesting to meet them before they returned to school. Of the students already contacted, Cameron said, "many ... are find [sic] young men and women," and only seven had been "counseled out of school." In some cases students had merely been attending other wards and had been reported inactive. "[S]ome of the bishops," he complained, "presented information which led me to believe that in some cases they were asking the University to follow through on their failure to activate" certain students.⁶⁸ As the summer wore on, some differences

64. Wilkinson Diary, 24 Apr. 1969.

65. *Ibid.*, 9 May 1969.

66. Wilkinson to Cameron, 7 May 1969.

67. Wilkinson to Cameron, 26 May 1969.

68. Cameron to Wilkinson, 27 June 1969.

apparently began to surface between Wilkinson, who considered the list to be of "students who ... should not return to the University," and Cameron, who wrote the president that he had "contacted numerous of these students, and to this point have not found any who in my opinion should not be given an opportunity to continue." Possibly seeking to console Wilkinson, he added: "Perhaps future contacts will reveal some."⁶⁹

Wilkinson continued to take considerable interest in the search for problem students. In July, when the report on the bishops' lists had been assembled, Wilkinson was annoyed to find that one campus stake had not submitted any reports. After inquiring of the stake president, Wilkinson learned that this particular stake had worked with sixty students who had "serious problems," but that the stake's approach was "to convince them of the personal benefits which would occur to them from observing the standards of the University."⁷⁰ As a result, the stake president reported, seven students had elected to leave the university, and all but four of the remaining number had modified their behavior to the extent that the bishops had felt no need to submit their names to the university. He said that four names, then, had been turned over to Cameron. Wilkinson followed up on this report by asking Cameron for the four names. Cameron reported that he had not kept the names since the "bishops had indicated they would handle these" cases, and that he "assumed that the bishops were able to extract the commitment to activity." While Wilkinson's response to Cameron's reply is unknown, his general approach is worth noting: his attention to individual cases and his apparent unwillingness to believe that a stake could have no students meriting discipline.⁷¹

That summer Wilkinson wrote in his annual letter to parents that part of the "difference between student conduct at BYU and that of activists at other universities" is that "*attendance at BYU is a privilege and not a right*" (emphasis in original). For the coming school year, he told parents, the university had turned away 2,000 applicants, "and it would be unfair," he added, "to reject them but admit others who did not abide by our standards." In addition to obedience to the law—by which Wilkinson meant the failure to participate in protests or demonstrations—the president saw, as the most compelling measure of "university standards," adherence to dress and grooming standards. As he had in the past, he cited appropriate passages from *For the Strength of Youth*. For the first time, though, Wilkinson went past the guidelines in the pamphlet to ban long hair and beards for men. "Although in the matter of dress the world is

69. Cameron to Wilkinson, 18 July 1969.

70. See Wilkinson to William R. Siddoway, 19 July 1969; Siddoway to Wilkinson, 23 July 1969.

71. See Wilkinson to Cameron, 24 July 1969; Cameron to Wilkinson, 28 July 1969.

becoming more lax," he wrote, "we intend at BYU to maintain a vigorous standards" in part because "our students have gained a great reputation for being clean, modestly dressed, good-looking young men and women," and "the appearance of even one person on our campus who deviates from our standards in dress or appearance impairs our reputation." BYU standards, he also said, were set because "our students are expected to set the proper examples for the entire Church." Just as missionaries were not allowed to wear long hair or beards, he wrote, BYU students, as models of Mormonism to the entire world, "have the obligation to represent the Church in the most favorable manner."⁷²

Cameron cited nearly the entire letter to parents in his own letter to students that summer. In addition he included a copy of the new, 15-point Code of Student Conduct. "Every student should understand that his right to register or to continue at BYU," he wrote, "will be contingent upon his strict observance of all University rules and regulations." When students arrived in September for registration, they were greeted by a headline in the *Daily Universe* reminding them that regulations had tightened once again: "Administration to Get Tough on Standards."⁷³ Evidence of the new measures was present in the form of "spotters," who scanned registration lines for beards or long hair on men, or high hem lines on women. The Associated Press reported that "[s]cores of students ran afoul" of the guidelines, and that violators were interviewed before being allowed to register. "All but one of the many we interviewed agreed to reexamine their personal commitments," Assistant Dean of Students LaVar Rockwood told the A.P.⁷⁴ Later that fall Dean of Women Lucile Petty reported to Wilkinson that at the fall registration 201 female students had been interviewed regarding dress length.⁷⁵

By October, according to the minutes of the Dress Standards Committee, there were reportedly only two beards on campus—one attributed to (non-Mormon) religious beliefs, the second to skin problems. At the same meeting committee members reviewed the results of an informal survey administered by history professor Richard Poll to almost 1,700 students, which found about 80 percent of students favorable or very favorable to the dress standards, and only 11 percent unfavorable or very unfavorable.⁷⁶

72. Wilkinson, excerpted in J. Elliot Cameron to "Dear Student," ca. June 1969.

73. "Administration to Get Tough on Standards," *Daily Universe*, 18 Sept. 1969.

74. "Guards Scan BYU for Long-Hairs," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 Sept. 1969. See also "BYU Rejects Beards, Holds Down Line on Miniskirts," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 Sept. 1969.

75. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:328.

76. Dress Standards Committee Meeting Minutes, 15 Oct. 1969, UA 553, BYUA.

FINALIZING SKIRT LENGTHS

Still, at least one member of the board of trustees continued to press Wilkinson for a more positive approach. In "one of our meetings," wrote Apostle Delbert L. Stapley regarding Wilkinson's summer letter to parents, it "was the feeling that a positive position should be taken, and instead of threatening students, appeal to their sense of modesty and decency. As you know," he added, "Joseph Smith said that people should be taught correct principles and then govern themselves." Stapley also requested that Wilkinson hold to the "approved" language of the church's *For the Strength of Youth* regarding dress lengths rather than specifying lengths by their relation to the kneecap.⁷⁷

For half a decade the church pamphlet had been a thorn in Wilkinson's side. All editions of the pamphlet carried a statement that "modesty cannot be determined by inches or fit since that which looks modest on one person may not be so on another." Early editions, though, had gone on to explain that, according to church standards, "Skirts should be long enough to cover the knee cap." But the most recent editions, to the president's chagrin, noted only that "[s]kirts and dresses should be of modest length." As skirt lengths continued to be a problem, some of Wilkinson's advisors, Dean of Women Lucile Petty in particular, felt that the school could not enforce a consistent standard without a firm position on what constituted a "proper dress length."⁷⁸

In early January 1970 Wilkinson set out to resolve the issue once and for all. Writing to deans Cameron and Petty shortly after the new year began, Wilkinson identified *For the Strength of Youth* as a major stumbling block to setting a firm policy. The difficulty he saw was in trying to enforce a stricter standard at BYU than church leaders had set forth "to govern the entire Church." His recommendation to Cameron and Petty was that, in keeping with the current language in *For the Strength of Youth*, they not insist that dresses cover the kneecaps, but that they set a strict regulation that "dresses be no shorter than just above the knee. Indeed," Wilkinson added, "with some of the more plump girls even that is not modest."

For Wilkinson, the issue was important in part because "one becomes quickly accustomed to seeing girls go around with dresses much above the knees" and because "there is a human sex tendency for men to like this style." In addition, he received constant pressure "from girls who do adhere to our standards about the other girls who do not." Reviewing the brief history of his attempts to eliminate miniskirts from campus, Wilkin-

77. Stapley to Wilkinson, 2 Oct. 1969.

78. Petty's position is represented in Wilkinson to J. Elliot Cameron and Lucile Petty, 2 Jan. 1970.

son also pointed out that the board had advised administrators (though never through "formal resolutions," he noted) that standards should be upheld "by means of persuasion ... but that if after persuasion they did not conform, we have the right to suspend them from the Institution." Suspension, he said, would be meted out on three grounds: first, that the guilty were violating standards; second, that they were violating their pledge to uphold these standards upon entering school; and third, that a violation also constituted an "attitude [that] is improper."

His plan was simple: stage the same kind of policing of styles at second semester registration that the deans had supervised the previous fall. Those students who were initially turned away but chose eventually to conform, he said, should be warned that one more violation would warrant their suspension. Anyone who responds in an "impudent" manner "should be suspended." Wilkinson also told Cameron and Petty that he had attempted to get a letter from the First Presidency on the issue but "under the present circumstances"—referring to the incapacitation of church president David O. McKay—such an attempt might not be fruitful. At the very least he thought a letter from himself to the students, printed in the *Universe*, would serve to remind students of tightened standards.⁷⁹

In a meeting with trustees a few days later, Wilkinson reported that 79 men and 201 women had been prevented from registering due to dress and grooming standards violations. All but three of the students chose to comply and stay in school. Wilkinson also complained about the "liberalization" of *For the Strength of Youth* and was informed by Apostle Stapley that a new statement from the church would recommend the "covering of the body from the shoulders down to the knees." Wilkinson said such a statement would be helpful in his campaign to prevent miniskirts from appearing on campus. He also assured the board that he was attempting "persuasion" as a strategy for enforcement, but that "in cases of defiance [the school] intended to suspend the girls unless instructed otherwise." Church leaders approved.⁸⁰

Wilkinson met with Stapley and another apostle, N. Eldon Tanner, in mid-January the next year "to get their support with respect to standards of dress at the BYU—that is, that dresses should be to the knee. They both promised their support," he recorded, but added that "in the present chaotic condition at Salt Lake City"—President McKay's continued deterioration, presumably—"one does not know what to expect."⁸¹

A few days later Wilkinson confided to his diary that he was frustrated by what he saw as a lack of support from his administrative staff

79. Ibid.

80. BYU Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 7 Jan. 1970.

81. Wilkinson Diary, 14 Jan. 1970.

on this issue. Although the administration had been working "for over a week" on a statement to students setting a specific length for dresses, he left the matter in the hands of three key administrators only to be "shocked," a few days later, to find that the statement they prepared contained no specific limitations.⁸²

The letter from Cameron to students subscribed to "persuasion" rather than to threats. The standards he outlined included: "Being clean and well-groomed; Avoiding the wearing of mini-skirts, which means that skirts and dresses should be of modest length, and they should not be too tight fitting; Avoiding long hair, beard and grubby appearance." Cameron's statement that administrators "have purposely avoided setting specific mathematical measurements for dress and grooming" was likely part of what had "shocked" Wilkinson, who had worked for months to establish a specific standard. Rather than set an exact length, Cameron stressed to students that their compliance was a matter of honor and consideration for church members who would, if allowed to attend the school, willingly submit to the dress codes. "If you are one who chooses not to comply with BYU standards," he concluded, "we ask you not to register next semester."⁸³

At registration in February 1970, Lucile Petty and LaVar Rockwood again assumed their roles as dress monitors. The *Universe* reported that they interviewed nearly 100 students who were not allowed to finalize registration until they demonstrated compliance.⁸⁴ The *Universe* also reported that a public relations subcommittee of the school's dance committee had been organized to police standards at school dances. A handful of students, according to the article, would "circulate among those attending the dance until they find a girl whose dress is visibly shorter than average," and then invite her to leave. The standard for "boys" would be neatness rather than conforming to an average length.⁸⁵

The *Universe* editorial staff responded to the administration's continued efforts with a sarcasm characteristic of this period. The in-house editorial decried the evils of the "maxi-coat," which was being used by subversive coeds to conceal their "mini-skirts" as part of "an effort to undermine the very fabric of our civilization." "We, the studentbody," editors wrote, in language that parodied the university president, "must unite in combating this festering sore on our campus. We must eradicate this evil from our boundaries and be a shining example unto the world."⁸⁶

82. Ibid., 17 Jan. 1970.

83. Cameron to "Dear Students," printed as "Cameron Stresses Standards," *Daily Universe*, 19 Jan. 1970.

84. "Dress at Registration," *Daily Universe*, 5 Feb. 1970.

85. "New Committee Lays Down Dress Rule," *Daily Universe*, 4 Feb. 1970.

86. "Clothing: Maxi-Evils," *Daily Universe*, 6 Feb. 1970.

Resistance persisted from individuals, as well. An assistant professor of Spanish wrote to the *Universe* that the "intolerance toward beards at BYU is intolerable." Claiming the right to wear a beard as part of his "patrimony from God, as a male, as one of his sons," the junior faculty member accused the administration's standards watchdogs of being "scribes and pharisees" who maintained "whited sepulchres."⁸⁷ When Wilkinson noticed individual students on campus in violation of codes, though, he continued to confront them personally. In March he wrote Dean Petty that he had followed a female student in a mini-skirt into the administration building. "I would be safe in saying that [her skirt] was at least six inches" above the knee, he wrote. He asked her name, and when she hesitated, he told her he wanted her to report to the Dean of Women's office, because "she knew as well as anyone else that her dress did not conform to University Standards." Wilkinson added that the "disgusting thing was that she didn't have anything to show except some stilts."⁸⁸

Deans Petty and Cameron warned in a *Daily Universe* interview in March that first-time dress standards violators (all of whom were presumed to be "girls") would be interviewed by Petty. Second-timers would receive a warning of suspension, and a third-time violator would face suspension for a set period of time. Cameron stated that "No one is ever going to be expelled for dress standards," but added that the term "suspension" leaves the option open to the student to attend another school. Further, Cameron and Petty agreed, a third violation would indicate, in addition to a dress code violation, a lack of "personal honor and integrity" that might require disciplinary action.⁸⁹

In April the Young Democrats (whose presence on campus irritated Wilkinson anyway) hosted a question-and-answer session on dress standards that included deans Cameron and Petty as well as Gary Carver, head of the Standards Office. The panel fielded questions on the rationale behind several parts of the dress policies. Asked about the prohibition of women's pants, Petty said church leaders had endorsed *For the Strength of Youth*, which discouraged Mormon women from wearing pants in most public settings. "I wasn't on the committee which compiled this [pamphlet]," she said, "and I don't know why [the proscription was included, but] it's my business to enforce the rules." Carver added that he was "working to find a rationale" for some of the standards with which he was personally uncomfortable, but added that he had to accept them in the meantime. Cameron said his own rationale did not matter, since "the Church leaders' saying it is all that is necessary," though when pressed he conceded that "many things which happen on this campus are not

87. Wendell Hall to the editor, *Daily Universe*, 23 Feb. 1970.

88. Wilkinson to Petty, 12 Mar. 1970.

89. "Dress Standards Rule," *Daily Universe*, 9 Mar. 1970.

done by divine authority." Cameron also said he felt BYU's standards were "higher" than the church's, but when some students objected he agreed that "stricter" might be a better word.⁹⁰

Later that month Associate Dean of Students LaVar Rockwood informed Cameron that a committee that included Rockwood, Petty, Carver, and two others had drafted a "specific statement on dress and grooming standards." The committee's main recommendation was that the school no longer use language that suggests or advises, but treat standards as requirements. "I am convinced," he told Cameron, "that it will be impossible to enforce standards unless the students are informed as to specifically what is expected." In order to do so, Rockwood suggested a massive public relations campaign to inform students, faculty, and university personnel of the new regulations. Faculty, in particular, must be persuaded to help enforce the standards, he wrote. "Some faculty are going to be very upset about this kind of strict enforcement," he added. "It is my guess they will not participate. Many of them would rather resign than be required to enforce or deny admission to classrooms."⁹¹

The proposed statement, however, did not receive approval, perhaps because trustees still could not agree on how to approach the issue of regulations and enforcement. In the meantime, Wilkinson, who continued to receive complaints from students, parents, and local church leaders that the school was not strict enough, began to feel even greater urgency to remove violators from campus. In May, Petty informed Wilkinson that thirty-three female students had been placed on a year's probation for dress code infractions.⁹² Wilkinson approved heartily. "We must be unusually vigilant from the very first day of school," he wrote to Petty and Cameron, "both for this summer and for next fall in enforcing these standards." He also gave academic administrators "the urgent request that they immediately formulate some program of support from the faculty so that next year everyone will be supportive of this program right from the start of summer school and from the start of fall term."⁹³ When the student body president—more critical of Wilkinson than some others had been—heard of the plans, he fired the president a protest letter: "If the introduction of these arbitrary specifics is an attempt to remove 'radical' elements from campus, I think that it is ill-founded."⁹⁴

Over the summer administrators continued to compile lists of stu-

90. "Dress Board Gives Reasons," *Daily Universe*, 17 Apr. 1970.

91. Rockwood to Cameron, 28 Apr. 1970.

92. Petty to Wilkinson, 19 May 1970.

93. Wilkinson to Cameron and Petty, 23 May 1970.

94. Brian Walton to Wilkinson, in Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 252. Wilkinson had previously instigated an investigation of Walton for supposed leftist sympathies.

dents who should be monitored or whose registration materials should be "tagged" to prevent them from starting school in the fall without having been interviewed about their attitudes toward dress standards. (One such list, sent from LaVar Rockwood to Gary Carver, included a grandson of a church apostle.⁹⁵) At the beginning of fall semester, the *Daily Universe*, having undergone a change in editors, argued that an enrollment cap meant "we do not think that it is proper for us to allow students who do not participate either in our church activities or avail themselves of other great opportunities on this campus, to remain at BYU." The article noted that BYU has "exit as well as admissions standards."⁹⁶

By that fall Wilkinson had submitted his resignation to the First Presidency, though he would not leave office until the middle of the next year. Following the death that year of church president David O. McKay, Wilkinson felt that support from ranking church leaders—particularly Elder Harold B. Lee—would probably diminish.⁹⁷ A September announcement on "Grooming and Dress Standards for Young Men and Women of the Church," included in the church's *Priesthood Bulletin*, for example, stressed the more "liberalized" language of "modesty" and "free agency" rather than the shoulders-to-knees regulations that Wilkinson had worked for and even had been promised by some apostles.⁹⁸

Before leaving office, Wilkinson still hoped to see BYU put its dress and grooming guidelines on paper, and for him the issue still carried political significance and near-apocalyptic urgency. In February 1971 a Gallup poll showed that 54 percent of American male college students wore their hair in what could be considered "long" styles (though only 7 percent wore it "to or below the shoulder"). The other 45 percent wore what could be considered "traditional" short cuts. The poll also confirmed Wilkinson's long-held suspicions that an association existed between long hair and leftist politics.⁹⁹

In keeping with national trends, BYU witnessed a vast increase in the number of dress and grooming violations—especially in men's hair length—during the 1970-71 school year. In September University Standards interviewed 682 registering students—405 women and 277 men—regarding their appearance. Following second semester registration in February 1971, at which administrators employed a panel of students to identify violators, the *Universe* reported that nearly 1,200 students,

95. Rockwood to Carver, 4 June 1970.

96. "'Y' Policies Explained," *Daily Universe*, 25 Sept. 1970.

97. Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 32.

98. "Grooming and Dress Standards for Young Men and Women of the Church," *Priesthood Bulletin* 6 (Sept. 1970): 2.

99. George Gallup, "Long Hair Stands Out as Style for Campus," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 Feb. 1971.

mostly men, had their records tagged and were later sent letters from college deans informing them of the infraction and requesting compliance.¹⁰⁰ In one such letter, an offending student was warned that "[d]eviations of dress and grooming tend to give the impression of alliance with those bizarre groups of students whose misdirected ideals would lead them to destroy our universities and even our society." As an example: "One of our fine students, of lofty ideals, could see no reason why he should not groom himself after the fashion of the day until he was approached by one selling pot. He was shocked and asked why he should be identified as a potential buyer of marijuana. He was told: 'Man, you give me the cues.' If you wear the coat of the enemy you can get shot," this dean said.¹⁰¹

A BYU Survey Research Center study conducted in March revealed that almost 40 percent of the students violated dress and grooming standards in some way, and that over 85 percent did so knowingly.¹⁰² Perhaps in response, Wilkinson proposed to the board of trustees that the Code of Student Conduct he had helped create be abandoned and replaced by a legal contract with students that made the university's expectations clear and legally defensible. The board rejected the idea.¹⁰³ The following month the administration moved ahead in other ways to maintain standards. They announced that beginning with the upcoming spring term, students whose registration packets were tagged would be monitored by teachers who would report back to the Standards Office if the student had complied.¹⁰⁴

At the same time this committee was exploring new ways to enforce dress codes, the executive committee of the board of trustees suggested to Wilkinson that women's dress standards be loosened to include pant suits but still exclude "levis and slacks." On further consideration, they agreed to allow pant suits and slacks, but to exclude jeans, effective the following school year.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps in an attempt not to lose ground, as the month of April drew to a close Wilkinson conferred with administrators on the Committee on Dress Standards, who "consented," he wrote, "to my giving a statement at Devotional to the effect that we were going to be more severe on violators of our dress standards." Such a measure would be, Wilkinson thought, a last stand of sorts. "I am cognizant of the

100. "Dress Violators Mount," *Daily Universe*, 5 Feb. 1971.

101. A. Lester Allen to C**** L. H****, 23 Feb. 1971.

102. "Codes Broken Knowingly," *Daily Universe*, 3 Mar. 1971.

103. See Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 120.

104. "Dress Standards Committee Tries New Method of Confronting Violators," *Daily Universe*, 8 Apr. 1971.

105. A summary of these proposed changes, discussed in board meetings on 25 March and 7 April 1971, is included in BYU Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 6 Oct. 1971.

fact that this committee," he wrote, "would much prefer that we wouldn't do this but handle this merely by love and persuasion. I am, however, conscious of the fact that we have not been successful in doing it that way."¹⁰⁶

Wilkinson's statement was forceful. "Heretofore we have had a general policy," he announced, by first warning a student, then placing him or her on probation, then taking the final measure of suspension. "Hereafter," he said, "there will be no warning given to those who violate these standards. By registering they have already agreed to abide by the standards and thus have already been warned as to what the rules are. ... The Dean of Students and his staff are given the authority, without any further warning of any kind, to suspend students who violate our standards, even for a first aggravated offense." He added: "students who are not taking advantage of the unusual privileges of this Institution, such as regular attendance at Church, will be advised not to return next year. We deem it entirely unfair to permit those students to register at this Institution and at the same time exclude other students that would be very happy to come here and abide by all of the standards of this Institution."¹⁰⁷

Wilkinson's speech kept the campus abuzz for a few weeks. "If [the same] emphasis that has been placed on dress standards [were] placed on academics," wrote one student to the *Universe*, BYU would "be on its way in becoming a great university."¹⁰⁸ Other students relayed rumors that as many as fifty people had been suspended immediately following Wilkinson's speech. The *Universe* denied the story a week later, though Wilkinson, in another follow-up article, said that "some"—though not fifty—"have been suspended."¹⁰⁹ Four months later BYU had a new president.

While the long-haired radicals Wilkinson feared are now safely a part of American history, BYU's behavioral codes continue to reflect Wilkinson's influence. During his final years in office, the code took on the character it largely retains today. Indeed, with only subtle changes in recent years, the honor code and dress and grooming standards reflect the substantial items adopted during Wilkinson's tenure, and the latter continue to be the campus's leading indicator that students are adhering to the former. More importantly, the reasoning behind the code has for the most part remained Wilkinson's: BYU is a showcase to the world for the high moral stature of its students and of Mormons generally; its students are

106. Wilkinson Diary, 20 Apr. 1971.

107. Wilkinson, "Announcement to Student Body," 20 Apr. 1971; see also "President Warns Violators," *Daily Universe*, 21 Apr. 1971.

108. Stephen Wight to the editor, *Daily Universe*, 22 Apr. 1971.

109. "Rumor Validity Discredited," *Daily Universe*, 27 Apr. 1971; "Statement on 'Due Process' Made," *Daily Universe*, 28 Apr. 1971.

to help fuel Mormonism's moral leadership in world arenas. "BYU, as the flagship of LDS Church education," Wilkinson wrote in his official history, "had to set a proper example of dress, dance, and behavior in keeping with the Mormon philosophy that men and women should shun the world and all its unseemliness."¹¹⁰ In the face of enrollment caps that began under Wilkinson, the university's rationale for disciplinary action against honor code offenders has also remained: those who cannot or will not abide by BYU's behavioral restrictions should make way for those "worthy" applicants waiting to get in. With the goal in mind of keeping worthy students apart from the world, BYU's behavioral codes continue to aid the school in making model students.

110. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 3:331.