

Y. president praised the Honor Code

By Tad Walch

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PROVO – The amount of dialogue at Brigham Young University and about the university that focuses on the Honor Code continues to make an impression on BYU President Cecil Samuelson as he starts his fourth year on the job.

Samuelson endorsed the honor Code “without reservation” Tuesday during his annual welcoming devotional at the start of a new school year. He also laid out his case against those who downplay the Honor Code’s importance.

“Make no mistake, who we are in private and what we value most at our core are of supreme importance and are ‘weightier matters,’” he said. “However, it is also true that what we project externally should reflect who we really are.”

Samuelson speaks at devotionals twice a year and has now devoted three of his past six addresses to the Honor Code or BYU’s dress and grooming standards. In January 2004, he counseled female students to cover their midriffs. In September 2004, he said students who violate the Honor Code break the promise made by signing the code upon admittance to the university.

Samuelson clearly has the support of BYU’s Board of Trustees, composed of general and auxiliary officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which owns BYU. On Sunday, President Thomas S. Monson called Samuelson a “noble giant of the Lord” after Samuelson spoke at a multi-stake conference at the Marriott Center that included all of the church congregations made up of BYU students. President Monson is first counselor in the First Presidency of the church.

On Tuesday in the Marriot Center, Samuelson said the Honor Code is a principle of obedience, not blind conformity, and he considers it significant.

“Because we consider the mandate never to cheat on examinations, plagiarize in writing our papers, steal from our associates of the university, or commit any immoral act absolute, it does not excuse us from seemingly less requirements having to do with proper parking on campus or requirements with respect to dress and grooming.”

While there might be some disagreement on the hierarchy of importance of a specific standard in the Honor Code, Samuelson said all students and BYU employees must agree they will abide by the Honor Code because all signed it.

Following the Honor Code, he added, “is an outward manifestation of our inner appreciation for and understanding of the privilege of being at BYU.”

He also said a major reason for the Honor Code at BYU is that everyone is “beset with ideas, temptations and distractions that have the potential to lead us to places we do not wish to go and to consequences we would not choose.”

Samuelson's wife Sharon spoke first Tuesday and urged students not to follow the crowd. She told the story of a German family in the resistance group that planned the failed assassination attempt of Adolf Hitler in July 1944. The family's motto was "Et si omnes, ego non," or "Even if all, not I."

She promised BYU students they would be blessed if they "stand up to worldly influence which would draw you away from your beliefs and say, in mighty voices, 'Even if all, not I.'"