

THE MINISKIRT AND HIGHER EDUCATION



The hemlines of coed skirts aren't exactly dragging the ground these days. The miniskirt, an inclusive term used to describe any length higher than a ho-hum above the knee, has had a visible, if not profound, effect on higher education. It is a style that is difficult to ignore, and campus males have been observed crashing into posts, signs, bushes, small trees, and each other in the process of not ignoring it. Though no professors have taken to lecturing from the rear of their classrooms, many readily admit that the minis are terribly distracting. Many others readily admit that the minis are wonderfully distracting. "We must somehow muddle through," says one resigned pedant, "holding our heads high all the while." The sometimes incredibly small swatches of cloth which many coeds presently use to cover their lower thoraxes are, depending on where they strike the thigh bone, miniskirts, microskirts, or midiskirts. The mini hits about mid-thigh, and the micro even higher, just below a gasp. The midi is actually the most prevalent length on the Norman campus. There are a number of miniskirt lengths about, but many are in fact culottes, a precautionary fashion frowned on by purists. Jane Barrett, the coed at left, is wearing a genuine mini, which measures an eye-catching twenty-eight inches above the floor. The hemline lengths vary with the individual. Since Jane is six feet tall, her 28-inch hem, though sensational, may be a trifle inappropriate for your five-foot-two women. (Jane, incidentally, comes from a long—and tall—line of OU alumni. Her parents are Paul ['36ed] and Elizabeth Mertes Young ['35fa], of Muskogee. Her brother, Paul Young Jr., is a 1963 graduate. Her husband David W. Barrett, like Jane is a graduate student and a graduate of the University. Their son Chris, 17 months, plans to enter OU in Sept. 1984.) For most male students the minis have markedly increased the pleasures of girl-watching. A minied coed never fails to leave a wake of oglers who display a rather wide range of eyeing subtlety. "It's the boys who wear shades who really give you the treatment," says one perceptive young woman. "I guess they think they're undetected behind them." Says another: "I object only to those who let their mouths hang open. I think it's unbecoming to gawk." The places most preferred by the serious observers are Campus Corner, which one sunglassesed student describes as "a real test track"; the South Oval with Kaufman Hall the focal point, and the Towers area. Some have favorite spots, similar to secret fishing holes. "I take my books to a certain bench near the library which has good foliage concealment and field of vision (terms obviously acquired in ROTC) and spend the afternoon," explained one young man. The books? "Props," he answered. The advent of the mini in Oklahoma, which has a maxiskirt mentality, has been gradual and fairly recent, and this spring's retreat by England's Mary Quant, mother of the mini and its patron saint, from total devotion to high hemlines, has been disturbing to voyeurs in faraway Norman, who are finally enjoying the fruits of Miss Quant's labor on behalf of the hiked skirt. Though many hope that the fashion will become as indigenous to the college campus as climbing ivy and Coors beer, its evanescence must be recognized and the spirit of Robert Herrick's opening line in "To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time" heeded. ●