

1973

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Repository Citation

Kale, Wilford, "W&M Law School Agrees to Alter Enrollment Ratio" (1973). *1969–1975: James P. Whyte, Jr.* Paper 11.
<http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/jpwhyte/11>

W&M Law School Agrees To Alter Enrollment Ratio

By Wilford Kale

Times-Dispatch Staff
WILLIAMSBURG — The Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary plans to increase its ratio of in-state students in the 1974-75 academic year, college officials said Monday.

In response to a query from The Times-Dispatch, William and Mary President Dr. Thomas R. Graves Jr. said the college is prepared to move toward a ratio of 70 per cent in-state students and 30 per cent out-of-state students "as long as the quality and quantity of Virginia applications hold up."

The current in-state, out-of-state ratio at the law school is 60-40.

Response to Stone

The action by Graves and Law School Dean James P. Whyte was a response to a letter from State Sen. William F. Stone of Martinsville, chairman of the Legislative Commission for Higher Education.

Stone had written in March to Graves and Dr. Edgar F. Shannon Jr., president of the University of Virginia, requesting that the law school at each institution take additional steps to accommodate more Virginia residents or face a quota system on out-of-state students or, possibly, establishment of a third state-supported law school.

Shannon said last week that he had directed the university law school to increase its enrollment this year from 330 students to 350.

Prepared to Change

Graves said Monday that he had informed Sen. Stone in April that William and Mary was prepared to change its in-state ratio in the law school "in order to respond to current application pressure and to lessen the current and temporary problem."

It was learned that William and Mary's out-of-state ratio in its law school had been as high as 50 per cent in recent years, but that figure has been lowered in the past couple of years.

"We believe that to go beyond the 70-30 ratio in the short run," Graves said, "might have a negative effect on the character and image of the law school and its ability to be of maximum service to the state of Virginia in preparing its citizens for careers in law."

Graves said Sen. Stone has not contacted the college concerning Graves' April letter on the proposed ratio change.

The proposed law school ratio is the same as the one that has been established by the William and Mary Board of Visitors for undergraduate admission.

Dr. Graves told The Times-Dispatch that in the past three years the law school has

"doubled in size" to its present enrollment of approximately 450 students.

"This increase in enrollment has caused serious difficulties with overcrowding in the current physical facilities for the law school," Graves said. "The law school could not be

reasonably expected to increase beyond its present size until new and expanded facilities are available."

Present plans call for the renovation, in 1975 or 1976, of adjacent Rogers Hall, currently the law school.

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ly a chemistry building, for use as library and classroom space by the law school. The students are now crowded into the Marshall-Wythe Building, which was renovated for the school about six years ago when the law school enrollment was less than 200. Regarding a proposed third state-supported law school, Dr. Graves said that while he

was "no authority," he believed it would be unwise to invest in a third law school when most observers felt that the crush of law school applicants would be reduced in the next two or three years.

The State Council of Higher Education has reported that state and private law schools plan expansions which, by 1977, will provide 280 additional places.