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Law School Collusion Is Denied by Spong

By Charles Cox
Times-Dispatch
Education Writer

WILLIAMSBURG — Dean William B. Spong Jr. of the Marshall-Whitby School of Law denied Tuesday allegations of collusion between the American Bar Association and the College of William and Mary in the college's quest for a \$5 million law school building.

He was addressing the State Council of Higher Education, which recommended that Richard Bland College develop a two-year program for gifted students.

When the 1976 General Assembly clipped all but a token appropriation from the state budget, the ABA insisted that the law school's accredita-

tion was endangered until the new facility was completed.

Soon after, some lawmakers and others were muttering that the college had somehow encouraged the ABA to raise the issue as part of the college's campaign to squeeze building money from the legislature.

Instead of the \$5 million-plus that the college says is required, the assembly empowered Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr. to make available a token sum to begin, and groundbreaking took place Sept. 11.

The law school's accreditation "remains in grave jeopardy," in part because Godwin's demand for a 5 per cent cut in state spending "has created very serious problems for the law library," college President

Thomas A. Graves Jr. said at a session here of the State Council of Higher Education.

When the ABA agreed last spring to continuing accreditation, it was on the basis of promises of a stated level of continuing financial support. Those promises "are no longer accurate," Graves said. He added that "it is of critical importance that we receive the full funding at the 1977 General Assembly."

He did not suggest where the legislature might find the \$5 million, plus other millions already requested for other capital projects.

Spong, a former senator, said he "sensed an attitude . . . that there has been some collusion between the College of William and Mary and the American Bar Association to force the building of a new law school here at Williamsburg."

As president of the Virginia Bar Association, he has spent 18 months "looking into it [collusion charges], and I am absolutely convinced that that is not the case," Spong said.

Two lawyers on the state council, H. Merrill Pasco of Richmond and George M. Warren Jr. of Bristol, voiced sympathy for the Spong position.

After the U.S. Supreme Court a few years ago refused to allow Richard Bland College to become a four-year college on grounds that that would hinder desegregation of the tax-supported college system, a study was launched to make recommendations on the future of the two-year affiliate of the College of William and Mary.

The study committee proposed yesterday that mostly white Bland ought to develop a two-year residential program for gifted and talented students, "strengthen its ties" to William and Mary and "strengthen its relationships" with mostly black Virginia State College a few miles away.

The committee likewise suggested that Bland might have a future developing a center for continuing education. The committee came up with a list of five other possible suggestions for Bland's future