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New Building Called Cure For W&M Law School Ills

By Wilford Kale
Times-Dispatch State Staff
WILLIAMSBURG — A new building for the Marshall-Whyte school of law at the College of William and Mary will solve the current "accreditation problem," Law School Dean James P. Whyte said Tuesday night.

"Our major problem is space... in the library and we have no place to turn but to a new building at this point," he explained.

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A staff report issued earlier in the day in Richmond by the State Council of Higher Education said that the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools feel that state support of the William and Mary law school is "submarginal" and that accreditation of the law school is "submarginal" and that accreditation of the law school is, therefore, in jeopardy until deficiencies are corrected.

Whyte said he believed that "to say our accreditation is in jeopardy is a bit of an overstatement. We're not on the verge of going out of existence. Frankly, we need to sit more people in our library... We need more space for the number of students enrolled."

He explained that among the accreditation requirements for law schools is the provision

for a certain amount of student study space to be located within the library. "We just no longer have that space. The growth of our library collection is crowding the students, and the students are crowding the collection," he added.

Requested for 1975-76

Realizing several years ago that rapid growth of the law school in the late 1960s would soon exceed present facilities, the William and Mary administration, along with the support of then Gov. Linwood Holton, requested a new \$4.8 million law school building for the 1975-76 biennium.

In final action, the General Assembly earlier this year, in an across-the-board trim, eliminated the law school building from the budget, but did provide funds to enable the architectural planning for the new project to begin.

The General Assembly also provided funds in its budget for the upgrading of the law school, with additional salary supplements and library assistance.

Aware of Report

"General Assembly funding specifically for the law school was immensely helpful," said Dr. Thomas A. Graves Jr., William and Mary president. He said he and Whyte were aware of the accreditation report.

"We're making every effort here at the college and in the

law school," Graves said, "to rectify the situation in terms of financing, resources and facilities available to provide a quality legal education."

"But another major step, which will make all the difference in the world would be the final funding [by the General Assembly] of a new law school building."

Dr. Graves explained that once the new law school facility is built and once funds are obtained for that facility to provide a quality education, "we're going to be in good shape and can do the job that needs to be done."

"Once you get up to a certain level of funding and hold your own, that funding is sufficient," he said.

He added however, that the college will not ask the 1975 General Assembly for funds to construct the new law school building.

"We've been asked only to submit a request [for funds] if they are absolutely of an emergency nature," Dr. Graves said. "I talk in terms of critical need and absolute need when I talk about a new law school building... But I can not honestly talk about the new project as an emergency."

Dean Whyte said he was certain that the accreditation agencies "will give us plenty of time" to secure our new building and meet their requirements.