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W&M's Law School Accredited, for Now

By Ron Sauder
Times-Dispatch Staff
WILLIAMSBURG — The Marshall-Wythe School of Law of the College of William and Mary has retained its accreditation for now, but the college still must have a new building to satisfy the American Bar Association.

College officials released Wednesday a letter from James P. White, ABA consultant on legal education, which said that the rule to show cause why the school should not lose its accreditation will remain in effect until the college "last fully funded and commenced construction of a new law school building."

Resolution Adopted
 White's letter contained a resolution adopted by the ABA Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar in a June 19-20 meeting.

The council also ruled that:

— The hearing "shall continue in effect until the accreditation committee determines otherwise." The commissioner is Dr. L. Orrin Slagle, dean of the Ohio University Law School, who conducted a hearing on the William and Mary school May 13 in Chicago.

— The school must submit written reports signed by William and Mary President Thomas A. Graves Jr. and the law school dean, former Sen. William B. Spong Jr., "with respect to the matters of concern" on Dec. 1, and May 1, 1977.

— Slagle is directed to "recommend such action as from time to time he may deem necessary."

College officials disclosed in September that ABA accreditation of the law school was in jeopardy, primarily because of the inadequacy of the physical plant.

The ABA also was concerned at that time about faculty salaries and the law library.

A Top Priority
 The college sought \$5.6 million from the last session of the General Assembly to finance construction of a building, which had been a top priority request of the college for several years.

The General Assembly appropriated \$68,150 for site work and gave Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr. the power to allocate another \$5 million from a construction fund to finance the building.

Godwin said, however, that the money would be used to air-condition state mental hospitals.

Dr. Emeric Fischer, then acting dean of the law school, and Spong, then dean-designate, met with Slagle in May in Chicago to discuss the state of the law school and the progress that had been made.

The college released Wednesday the report written by Slagle to the ABA accreditation committee after that hearing. Slagle said the law school should be found "not in compliance."

But he recommended that accreditation be continued on the condition that Graves and Spong file statements with the council prior to the council's February and May 1977 meetings.

"If the report of the dean or the president indicated a delay in the construction of the new

building, which delay is occasioned by the failure of funding... the council should show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn."

The accreditation standards are "as applicable in hard

Continued on Page 6, Col. 1

Law School Gets Reprieve

Continued From First Page
times as they are in good times," Slagle said.
"The state, not the accrediting agency, must decide whether the Marshall-Wythe School of Law shall receive the necessary funding to bring it into compliance with the standards," he said.
Slagle denied that he or the ABA were pressuring Godwin or other state officials into

spending money for the school.
"Rather, the hearing officer's business was to make recommendations concerning the accreditation" of the school, Slagle said.
"If it is not to be continued, it is the business of the elected [state] representatives ... to determine what course of action is indicated," he said.
Slagle noted recent faculty

salary improvements, "from a ranking on median salaries of 134th among 140 accredited law schools to a position of 83rd among 150 in 1975-76."
Slagle said he also was satisfied with the degree of faculty autonomy over admissions, which had been another area of concern, and improvements in library staffing and holdings.