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Hope Seen for W&M Law School Rating

Times-Dispatch State Staff

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Times Dispatch State Staff

General Assembly financing for a new law school building during the coming session appears to not crucial to the continued American Bar Association accreditation of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary.

President Thomas A. Graves Jr. and an ABA representative who visited William and Mary on Wednesday, both indicated that the college is considering "interim solutions" that could satisfy the ABA's requirement forthcoming from the General Assembly next year.

Graves disclosed three weeks ago that ABA accreditation is in jeopardy, largely because of the inadequacy of the school's physical plant. Graves indicated that the urgency of William and Mary's request for $5.5 million to build a law school.

There have been indications from state officials, though, that the impending year's session will see the General Assembly vote on a bill that would authorize bonding for the first time.

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ABA Aide, Graves Hopeful

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Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, that money will be extremely tight and that the college should consider alternatives to a new building in the coming decade.

Graves spoke to newsmen following Wednesday's visit of ABA consultant James P. White, and said the college will consider "solutions now and the end of the fall semester...how best to cope with the limitations of the finances necessary on a temporary basis."

Graves said that if the funds do not come through next year, "we would hope that there is some sort of interim solution that would satisfy our concerns."

"Looking for Solutions" White, speaking at a news conference after a morning in which he met with Graves, George R. Healy, vice president for academic affairs, and acting law school dean Emeric Fischer, said "interim solutions..." if the funds do not come through next year, White said, "we would hope that there is some sort of interim solution..."

"Interim solutions..." White stressed once again the inadequacy of the law school's physical plant and library, saying that it is "in no way in compliance with our standards."

After talks with college officials on his third visit this year, White said it is "unlikely..." the ABA accreditation committee will recommend loss of accreditation. "I personally feel satisfied that..." White said. "...that both the college and the state are responding in good faith, given the financial exigencies that exist," he said. "...and would hope that some solution could be devised to satisfy the American Bar Association," he said.

"Admissions Policy"

Later, though, he said that one of the most important concerns within the school's student body is the admissions policy. "I believe..." White said, "that the admissions policy, and the implementation of that policy, is a matter of great concern to the ABA."

Graves himself said Wednesday that the second internal matter discussed between him and White had been faculty promotions, although he did not elaborate on the point at issue. After the two-hour morning meeting, White talked with the law school faculty members and then met with a large group of Marshall-Wythe students in the moot courtroom.

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