

# Bell Tower Sketched Out

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*Staff Writer*

On Feb. 20, the Board of Visitors approved a design for a new bell tower that will eventually command the middle of George Washington circle.

The tower, which will stand nearly 90 feet tall and boast a cupola with bells at the top, went through three different designs before the Board of Visitors approved this particular choice.

“One of the attractive features of having something in that location is that it can serve as an anchor to campus walk,” said Rick Hurley, assistant vice president and chief financial officer.

The bottom square tier of the tower will be almost 20 feet wide, and will include a 24-foot brick arch that students can walk through as they are crossing George Washington circle. The second tier will also be made of brick and will include an arch and a balcony.

The cupola on the third tier of the bell tower will have a clock and bells and will be made of a composite material in order to keep cleaning to a minimum. There will be a door on the bottom tier to allow access to the tower for maintenance, but students will not be allowed to enter.

Since the bell tower is almost 90 feet tall, the top of the spire will be seen from downtown Fredericksburg, an attractive feature to the Board of Visitors.

“In this case, we have an opportunity to create what we’re calling a new beginning for the new university,” Hurley said. He said by building a structure on campus that can be seen from other places in Fredericksburg, Mary Washington College will be reflecting the new image of the University.

Upward lighting from the bottom of the tower will also

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# Tower Plans Underway

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help the structure to be seen at night, even though this will probably not prove to be a problem since the bell tower will be almost twice as high as any other building on campus once erected.

Assistant Vice President of Facilities Services John Wiltenmuth said, for example, Virginia Hall is only about 40 feet tall.

Boydton  
Rochschild  
Rowland  
Architects in  
Richmond, Va.  
and its successor  
firms have  
worked with  
Mary Washington  
College for many  
generations.

"They tried to take pieces of existing campus architecture and meld them into the design of the tower," Hurley said. "That will give us something of significance."

The windows on the tower were designed to be the same as the ones in Dodd Auditorium and the railing on the arch of the second tier was taken from the doors in George Washington Hall.

The cost including construction is estimate at

\$1.1 million. The college is also working with a company that specializes in building brass bells and is looking at a package of four bells for about \$200,000, Wiltenmuth said.

"I don't necessarily think building the bell tower is a bad idea if it is funded from a grant or a donation," said senior Anne Litz. "But, I can't

say that I agree with building a structure that will use money from the students who will probably never see it on a campus that they use."

However, there is no scheduled date for the groundbreaking on the new tower, since the college does not have the money to fund its construction.

"We need to find a donor willing to fund it," Hurley said.

But some students think the tower is a good addition to the campus.

"I think the idea of having the tower is really cool and the fact that it can be seen from downtown will give the college more of a name in Fredericksburg than it already has," said senior Tim Jensen. "It could be a good start for the new University."

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-Rick Hurley