

Board Of Visitors Saves The Name

University Of Mary Washington Chosen As The New Name

By CONOR REILLY
Editor-In-Chief

In a densely packed Red Room on Saturday morning, President Bill Anderson delivered his recommendation to the Board of Visitors, with a group of anxious students and alumni looking on.

"We are making a decision today that will unfold a university that will already be noticed," he said. "My recommendation is that, reflecting on all the information, we move forward with the name University of Mary Washington."

After little discussion, the BOV decided unanimously on University of Mary Washington as the new umbrella name for Mary Washington College and the James Monroe Center. The name was one of two passed on by the Image and University Name Committee, which voted 10 to nine that their first preference for the new name be Washington and Monroe University at their Nov. 18 meeting.

The new name must receive state approval and will be presented to the Virginia General Assembly in late January or early February. If passed through the legislature, the new name will take effect on July 1, 2004.

The college is also going to identify approximately \$100,000 out of private donations in order to fund the name change, according to Rick Hurley, executive vice president and chief financial officer for the college. This money will go to replace or change road signs, the college's Web site and other items.

The students, administrators and faculty present applauded the decision at the close of the meeting.

"I am ecstatic," said Kristen Orstead, student government president and voting member on the BOV.

Senior Jennifer Hammond echoed the elation.

"I'm very pleased about the decision," she said. "I'm glad that student voices were finally heard."

Faculty Senate President and professor of computer science Ernest Ackermann said that the primary concern of the faculty senate was to see that Mary Washington remained in the name.

"I'm really happy to see that Mary Washington was considered prominently," he said.

Dori Eglevsky, the rector for the Board of Visitors,

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voted for University of Mary Washington as both a member of the Image and University Name Committee and as a board member. She said it was important for the college to go forward with this name together.

"I really am delighted because I think we have built a reputation of quality on that name," she said.

Alumna Catherine Cogut, class of 1998, said she was pleased with the decision.

"I'm glad they kept the name Mary as opposed to the name presented by the committee," she said. "I'm very satisfied with [the name]."

Others felt the name "Mary Washington" might cause setbacks at the college.

"I'm disappointed with the decision of the board," Roy

Gordon, professor of athletics, health and physical education and men's soccer coach said. "But they made the decision that they felt was in the best interest of the school."

Brenda Vogel, professor and director of teacher education programs at the James Monroe Center said that, while keeping Mary Washington in the name was not a loss, it may adversely affect the James Monroe Center.

"It doesn't help the James Monroe Center," she said. "I think we will have to work a little harder now."

But the decision also raised questions regarding the new name.

Earlier in the year, the University Image and Name Committee did not consider University of Mary Washington as a possible name.

At the final meeting, though, the committee decided to remove Mary Washington University from consideration.

Senior Stephanie Booth said, "I think there should be more consideration given to the phrasing."

Ackermann agreed.

"I like the name Mary Washington University much better," he said. "I don't know of any other place that's the university of a person."

Board member and alumna Margaret Moncreau said at the meeting, "I would much prefer Mary Washington University. I would

not be as happy to support University of Mary Washington, but I am likely to."

She added that she thought the BOV needed to be united when they brought their decision to the General Assembly.

Others thought the phrasing of the name will place the college in a special category among universities.

Hurley said, "I like the uniqueness of having 'university' first."

He also said having university up front will place Mary Washington alphabetically among well-known higher learning institutions like University of Virginia.

Kathleen Mehfoed, alumna and president of the Image and Name Committee presented the various data given to the committee over the years.

In 1997, when the college began to look

at going to university status, a survey of prospective students showed that 24 percent of those surveyed liked Mary Washington University best, while 23 percent liked Washington and Monroe.

Of 755 respondents to an alumni survey issued in 2002, 66 percent were in favor of Mary Washington University.

Also, 51 percent were strongly opposed to Washington and Monroe University.

James Monroe Center students were also polled. Of 194 students, 66 percent felt that Mary Washington University was a favorable name, while 41 percent thought Washington and Monroe was favorable.

An informal survey administered by the Student Government Association said 91 percent of almost 1,500 Mary Washington College students voted for Mary Washington University.

The survey also included an option to write in a name. Mehfoed said 64 students chose to write in University of Mary Washington.

Mehfoed also said as the president of the committee, she voted for University of Mary Washington to be the new name.

She explained why the Image and University Name Committee was split in their voting.

"The committee recognized the conflict between wanting a good name for the future and having Mary Washington in the name," she said.

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—Kathleen Mehfoed, President of Image and Name Committee