

New library tops plans for WPCC

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When the library at Western Piedmont Community College was constructed in the 1960s, it was thought that it was big enough to serve the school's student population — and it was when that population stood at 500 students.



Byrd

With enrollment at the school now past the 2,000 mark and still climbing, however, construction of a new learning resource center has become a top priority for the school's administrators and board of trustees.



Richardson

WPCC President Jim Richardson and trustee Bob Byrd say the campus needs a learning center which could offer students more privacy for studying and opportunities to learn through the use of advanced technological equipment.

Both school officials said the library would also serve the needs of nonstudents throughout the county and even in neighboring counties.

Byrd, who chairs the building and grounds committee, said the center could serve as a "regional library center" — extending service to include McDowell, Rutherford and Caldwell counties.

Although plans for the library are brewing, Byrd said the date of completion of the new facility depends on how the construction of the facility will be financed.

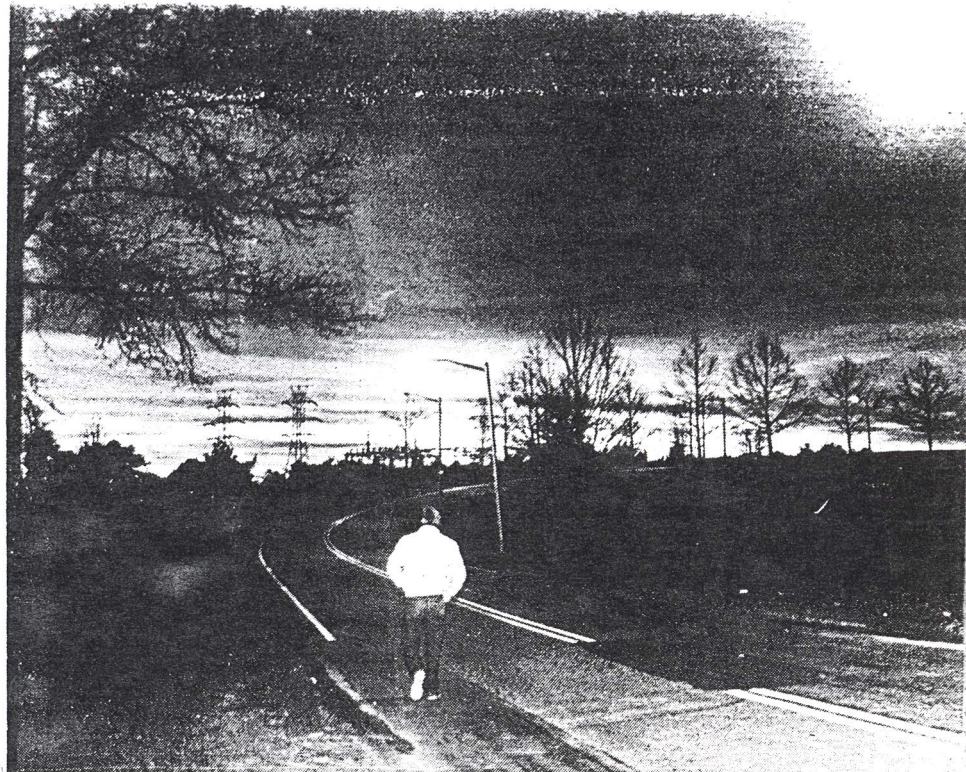
In order for the school to receive money from the N.C. General Assembly for the library, it must employ an architect and submit complete architectural drawings for the facility, including cost estimates.

Last year, the General Assembly allocated \$26 million for specified construction needs within the community college system, and WPCC received \$500,000 from that amount to finish building its vocational center and to help finance beginning procedures for the library.

The vocational building, which includes approximately 86,000 square feet, will be ready for students this fall, Richardson added.

Byrd said school officials are grateful for the state money they received last year. He said some of the members of the 1983 General Assembly who helped WPCC receive the funds were Ray Fletcher, Jim Edwards, Donald Kincaid, Reid Poovey, George Robinson, Jack Hunt and Bob Hunter.

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New lighting brightens campus of Western Piedmont Community College.

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In pleading its case again before the General Assembly, Richardson said the college must submit reasons why the new library is "a top priority" for WPCC, along with the architectural blue prints, in order for the state to select Western Piedmont as a recipient of state money this year.

Byrd said the college is also "trying to plead its case with the community college system to put the library high on the priority list" as well as keep state representatives well informed of the need and purpose the library would serve.

"Not knowing how the community college would catch on" when WPCC was constructed in the 1960's, Byrd and Richardson said the present library was then big enough for its enrollment of 500 students but is too small to serve a college with an enrollment of 2,000 students.

Byrd said the present library, which is located on the second floor of the administration building, is not big enough to contain material that could be vital to students, professionals and

individuals throughout the region.

For example, he said the present library has access to health material "for little or no cost" but it can't offer this service to students because there is no room to store the materials.

Richardson said the new center needs to offer "more than just books" for its students, but it should include such learning resources as an audio visual center, a computer center and microfiche and microfilm equipment.

He said the present library offers students no private study rooms or typing rooms, which the new center will include, and the new learning center will also better serve the campus by including new classroom space.

The next step for the library is for the building committee to review written proposals for the library project from architects across the state and region, Byrd said.

Based on the proposals the building and grounds committee will decide which architects will be interviewed by the board, and the final architectural firm will be selected by February 15.

Reviewing Western Piedmont's

construction changes during 1984, Richardson said the college recently installed new street lights from Highway 64 to the college, which the Burke County Commissioners funded.

Richardson also said through the efforts of Morganton Mayor Andrew Kistler, the Morganton City Council and WPCC officials, the state completed a sidewalk along Highway 64 this past year, connecting the college with North Carolina School for the Deaf and costing approximately \$30,000.

Richardson said future plans for the college, aside from the completion of the vocational building and the new learning center, include plans to repave the road into the college and possibly build restroom facilities at the lake.

Byrd said a second priority to the library is the college's need for a physical education facility, but "the people in Raleigh told us the funds are not available."

He said there is no question as to whether the school needs a physical education center, but the library is of primary importance at this time.