

# Notre Dame to move from 'college' to 'university'

The College of Notre Dame of Maryland's board of trustees voted in May to change its designation to include the word 'university.'

Further discussions on a new designation are expected to come in October, the school's president, Mary Pat Seurkamp said. The board will discuss timeline, budget and implementation of the decision. It is expected that the meeting will result in when the designation would be implemented.

Founded in 1873, the school is known for its undergraduate program that serves women, but Notre Dame has expanded with weekend college and accelerated college programs open to men and women.

Notre Dame has a graduate studies division, a pharmacy school and features two doctoral programs.

"If you look at what's happened at the College of Notre Dame since the 1970s," Seurkamp said, "it's been a time of significant growth and change."

All total, there are 1,254 undergraduate students and 1,717 graduate students at Notre Dame.

Seurkamp said that the school gauged the opinions of 800 people associated with the school through focus groups, surveys and other means. She said 75 percent of those questioned were in favor of the designation change to 'university.'

"We all feel very good about the direction the college has been moving in and know that our programs are being well-received," Seurkamp said. "We think the mix we have is part of our strength. We also remain extremely, strongly committed to the women's college."

Loyola University Maryland changed its name from "Loyola College in Maryland" last fall. Similar to neighboring Notre Dame, the school said the 'university;

designation reflected the breadth of programs it offered as an institution. Mount St. Mary's University and Seminary made a change from 'college' to 'university' in 2004.

"This has been a conversation that's been brewing for years," Seurkamp said. "We all came to a conclusion it was time."

Seurkamp said Notre Dame could see growth in enrollment numbers because of the designation change, but will not be expanding physically for the foreseeable future. The school broke ground in May on a 25,000-square-foot building for its pharmacy school.

Seurkamp said that if, for example, there was a rise in undergraduate enrollment, the current buildings would be able to handle the new students.

"We all feel very good about the direction the college is moving in," Seurkamp said. "We know that our programs are being well-received."

Seurkamp said it is not the school's intention to become a large research university.

"We will always continue with our intense focus on teaching as our primary mission and operate as a smaller university," Seurkamp said.