

As the chief executive of the State of Maryland, I am pleased to be present with you on this important occasion. As Governor of the State of Maryland — I believe this position would correspond to that of a Ministerpresident of a Bundesland — I do not want to forego the opportunity to bring to my German friends the warmest regards of the people of the State of Maryland, a State which always had very close ties with all European countries, but in particular with Germany. Since the middle of the 17th Century, shortly after the founding of Maryland, Germans have settled in the Chesapeake Bay — in the land of pleasant living. In 1660, one of the first Germans to become a resident of Maryland was Augustin Herrman. The many German societies and clubs that exist in Maryland today are evidence of these close ties.

The Munich campus is a tribute to the vision of our military leaders who sought to provide full-time higher education for the dependents of United States personnel stationed in Europe. Since 1950, almost five thousand students have matriculated on this campus. Eighteen years ago, the campus opened with thirty-four students; today there are five hundred and twenty enrolled. This is one kind of military escalation that wins universal support.

No doubt you realize that as overseas students you are very special people with very special advantages. Yours is not a cloistered campus but a living laboratory. You have studied European history at its source; you have studied foreign languages where you can and must speak them. You have benefited from a truly international faculty. You have unparalleled opportunities to travel, to experience other cultures and other people. You are sophisticated in the best sense of the word, worldly because you are at home anywhere in the world.

Many Munich students have transferred to Maryland's College Park campus and to other colleges and universities. The transition for some has proved challenging. Suddenly, they have moved from a small homogeneous setting to a large multiversity. Yet, this experience is not limited to the overseas student. It is the same challenge which confronts many students who transfer from America's junior and community colleges to a large university. This adjustment is an adventure in itself.

Your present class represents families stationed in thirty-two countries and we are proud that our University of Maryland in Munich serves as your academic focal point.

I congratulate each of you on your academic progress and your personal achievements. I wish you great joy in your present activities and great success in the future.