

autonomy will in effect say to all involved and to all who may be interested that the State of Maryland is against excessive outside interference and that the Board of Regents does have the power to manage its own affairs.

To improve further higher education, the University must move forward and upward. As previously stated, it is a complex structure with general and unique functions. It has justified the degree of statutory autonomy which has been

granted. Its maturity, its complexity and its great importance in the future development of Maryland recommend that it be given constitutional recognition.

In my judgment a degree of autonomy guaranteed in the Constitution will contribute immeasurably to the development of a great public institution in Maryland.

Sincerely yours,

WILSON H. ELKINS
President

LETTER FROM WILSON H. ELKINS, PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND,
TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 13, 1966

Mrs. Elsbeth Levy Bothe, Chairman
Committee on Miscellaneous Provisions
Constitutional Convention Commission
41 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Mrs. Bothe:

With reference to my letter of August 6, and our telephone conversation of a later date, I should like to clarify my position on constitutional "autonomy" for the University of Maryland. First of all, I want to emphasize that I am talking about a *degree* of autonomy, specifically, *power of management* on the part of the governing board.

In my letter, I reviewed constitutional autonomy in Michigan, describing how it had evolved over a period of more than 100 years. While some points can be made for constitutional recognition for all state-supported institutions of higher learning granting the baccalaureate degree, a special case can be made for the state university. In Maryland, the case for the University of Maryland is particularly strong.

It is strong because of its nature, function and complexity. It is the only public university in the state, serving as the university and the land-grant college with

some support from the federal government. The regents also serve as the State Board of Agriculture. The University has existed in some form since 1807; it has been a comprehensive institution since 1921.

The University has had a degree of statutory autonomy since 1952. Under this statutory autonomy, it has grown in quantity to one of the ten largest universities in the United States and, at the same time, the quality has been improved. It enjoys full accreditation by its regional accrediting association and numerous professional associations. It has been invited to establish a Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, which is recognition for excellence in the arts and sciences. The faculty has attained distinction in many fields and, owing to their stature, the University is engaged in a very substantial research program sponsored, in the main, by the federal government. The amount of sponsored research and training grants has increased from \$1,279,133 in 1953-54 to \$15,189,449 in 1965-66. These and many other illustrations which could be cited provide evidence of the progress of the University under statutory autonomy.