

The function of the University is general, and it is also unique in some respects. It offers professional, pre-professional as well as general education. Only the University offers the highest academic degree, the doctorate. Furthermore, the University is the principal research agency of the state, and this important area, which is an integral part of the graduate program, is growing rapidly. As a research agency, it derives funds from several sources, with the federal source rapidly becoming the most important. This multi-million dollar research activity *could not* function at even a satisfactory level without a degree of autonomy.

With its comprehensive teaching program, its vast research activity, its dependence upon state, federal and special funds for support, the governing board has to be in a position to make policies and oversee the administration of them. I am confident that if the Act of 1952, often called the Autonomy Act, had not been passed, the University would have suffered seriously. It has enabled the Board of Regents to exercise power of management and thereby develop and compete in the educational field.

Constitutional recognition will further enhance the reputation of the University and provide security for the future. In asking for this, the University does not seek independence from the legislature or

the executive branch of the government, but it does plead for the power of internal management. It does not seek to be independent of the Budget Bureau of the state in justifying funds from the state, but it should be independent of the Budget Bureau in the management of those funds. If the University did not have the power to purchase equipment and employ personnel without going through other agencies, it would not be in a position to carry on its vast and highly specialized research and service activities.

In summary, the University of Maryland presents a special case for constitutional recognition. Its comprehensive nature, complexity, size, unique function, and its experience with statutory autonomy places it in a position which is strikingly different from all other institutions in the state. Statutory "autonomy" can be eroded and has been in the past. In many and often devious ways, it is under attack continually. A simple provision in the constitution, giving power of management to the Board of Regents, will substantially strengthen the University of Maryland in the decisive years ahead.

I respectfully ask your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

WILSON H. ELKINS  
President

**LETTER FROM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION**

DECEMBER 22, 1966

Mr. H. Vernon Eney, Chairman  
Constitutional Convention Commission  
700 Mercantile Trust Building  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Mr. Eney:

The Alumni Council, the governing

body of the University of Maryland Alumni Association, at its meeting of December 9, 1966, passed a resolution strongly supporting the provision of higher education adopted by the Maryland Constitutional Convention Commission at its October 24, 1966 meeting