

The University of Maryland Computer Science Advisory Board

November 4, 2018

Governor Larry Hogan  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Mike Miller  
100 State Circle #H-107  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Speaker of the House Mike Busch  
100 State Circle #H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan, Senator Miller and Speaker Busch:

The University of Maryland Computer Science Advisory Board was formed to help the Department of Computer Science and the University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies (UMIACS) prepare for their next 40 years. The board comprises members who lead technology innovation in a range of industries.

We believe this week's actions by the Board of Regents highlight the troubling trend of prioritizing athletics above the University's core mission of education and research. In the middle of an ongoing, highly successful fundraising campaign, the Regents' actions have alarmed many donors and members of the UMD community across the country. This is an outcry that the Advisory Board has heard loud and clear.

Athletics is undoubtedly an important way of teaching valuable ideals such as teamwork, character, and integrity. But the attempt to shift sports to a for-profit endeavor has detracted from the University's core mission and led to behaviors that run counter to the very ideals that athletics should instill. Jordan McNair's tragic death and the initial decision by the Board of Regents to prioritize the standing of a football coach over the University president have put this conflict on full display, and given us an opportunity to reflect on our values.

Computer Science is one of many academic disciplines that create massive economic opportunity in Maryland and the nation. In FY2018 alone, the University was awarded \$545 million in research funding. Life sciences, information technology, aerospace and other research disciplines fuel Maryland's current economic prosperity. Investment in academics and research creates wildly successful companies and people that are eager to give back. The University's new Brendan Iribe Center for Computer Science and Engineering received generous private support of \$38 million from alumni, companies, parents, faculty, staff and students. Computer

Science enrollment has grown to 3600 students accounting for 11.7% of the student population. Much like mathematics and English, many majors now view a working knowledge of computer science as essential to a successful education.

The University and its governing bodies must urgently strengthen their commitment to academics and research. This must include an examination of the structure and composition of the Board of Regents by the General Assembly and Governor, to ensure that the academic and research interests of the state and its universities are adequately represented.

We strongly support President Wallace Loh, his actions this week, and his authority to make critical decisions for the University of Maryland. No organization will be successful unless its leader is empowered to lead. Dr. Loh's steadfast support of Computer Science at the University has been a key to its success. In light of the need for continuity during this critical stretch in the University's history, we would respectfully ask that he reconsider his announced retirement in June and continue on as President.

Doubling down on education and research in computer science and across the board is the right path toward a strong University and economic success in Maryland. The University of Maryland is one of the state's greatest assets. We request your support to launch a thoughtful and timely effort to reform and strengthen its governing board to ensure the University and Maryland's economy continue to thrive far into the future.

Signed,

[Adam Wenchel](#),

Chair

CEO, Arthur AI

Computer Science, BS, 1999

[David Baggett](#),

UMCPF Trustee, CEO of Inky

Computer Science, BS, 1992

[Brendan Iribe](#),

UMCPF Trustee, Co-founder and former CEO, Oculus

Computer Science & Electrical and Computer Engineering, 2001

[Jagdeep Singh](#),

CEO Quantumscape

Computer Science, BS, 1996

Valerie Taylor,

Director, Argonne Labs

[Michaelangelo "Mike" Volpi,](#)  
[Partner, Index Ventures](#)  
Computer Science Parent, 2021