



COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES



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We embody the University's land-grant mission with a commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition, preserve our natural resources, improve quality of life, and empower the next generation through world-class education.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022 | NOON - 2 PM

ANSC COURTYARD

THANK YOU to the 2022 Excellence Awards Committee

Susan Barnes
Jennifer Rhodes
Bonnie Boyden
Amy Burk
Michael Elonge

Andrew Kling
Reggie Harrell
Ken Leonard
Trish Moore
Masoud Negahban-Azar



On-campus Staff Excellence Award

Rebecka Jones, student services coordinator for the Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA), and alumna of the IAA, combines creative energy, attention to detail, and an unfailing commitment to providing the best possible experience for every single student.

As student services coordinator, Becky handles many different tasks. She helps prospective and current students with questions or problems at every stage of the educational process, maintains student files, and provides support for advisors. Students hear from her every week through the email newsletter, *The Weekly GYST*, in which she reminds them about deadlines and events, connects them with resources, and celebrates exciting achievements.

At the same time, Becky spearheads the IAA's marketing and outreach efforts. She plans open houses and orientations, edits the IAA's bi-annual newsletter, *INAG News*, attends countless recruitment events, and maintains the IAA's website and social media accounts. She also chairs the Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment, and Engagement (MORE) committee.

In addition to serving the IAA, Becky serves the larger college as a member of the Agricultural Production Systems Strategic Initiative Committee and the AGNR Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Working Group. From her roots on her family farm and her experiences in 4-H and at the IAA, Becky has lived the land-grant experience, and she is dedicated to helping the next generation of students do the same.



Off-campus Staff Excellence Award

Since assuming the position of dairy program manager in December 2000, **Brian Spielman** has made continuous improvements in the dairy cattle herd (205 animals) and the research facilities. Through his hands-on management, continuing education and use of cutting-edge technology, he has reduced the cost of operating the dairy while also providing quality cattle suitable for research.

On average, Brian has assisted in completing four research projects per year for professors and graduate students in the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences during his tenure as dairy program manager. Approximately 80 undergraduates have worked at the Clarksville facility and gained valuable hands-on experience in preparation for veterinary school or other careers.

Brian assisted with preparing the Clarksville facility for the AGNR Open House for several years. He has also displayed CMREC cattle at the Maryland State Fair for the past 13 years. He has served on the overall AGNR Open House Committee as part of his leadership for the Dairy Display at the Clarksville facility and the U-learn Farm Committee as part of the cattle display at the Maryland State Fair. These events raise the visibility of opportunities to study dairy science as an undergraduate or graduate student, and provide excellent educational information on dairy cattle and the dairy industry for hundreds of visitors.

Brian has served on boards and committees for the Washington County Agricultural Expo and Fair and was inducted into the Maryland 4-H All Stars. He has received national recognition several times from Land O' Lakes and Dairy One for excellence in milk quality and the Holstein Association for genetic improvement.



On-campus Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award

An assistant research scientist in the Department of Environmental Science and Technology, **Dr. Amro Hassanein's** research focuses on finding reliable and applicable solutions to many of society's environmental challenges. His research plays a vital role in creating and implementing waste to energy technology that enhances environmental quality, reduces climate change impacts, and better manages our natural resources. Due to his achievements, Dr. Amro Hassanein has an excellent record of articles published in high-impact peer-reviewed scientific journals, and he has been successful as a Co-PI with over \$2.6M in competitive grants.

He has developed novel research about renewable energy production from poultry litter, which translates through his Extension appointment to benefit the community. He provided farmers in the Chesapeake Bay region with very useful information about anaerobic digestion to produce energy and extract nutrients from the poultry litter matrix, and to create a designer fertilizer that better meets crop needs. He has also worked in the area of nanoparticles and food waste, key challenges for the citizens of Maryland.

During the pandemic, he has been one of ENST's environmental health and safety officers, keeping all in the department safe. He and Eni Baballari developed a novel laboratory mothballing and preservation system at the beginning of the pandemic that was adopted as a university best management practice.

Dr. Hassanein is a very talented and productive scientist who fully integrates his research findings into an impactful Extension program.



Off-campus Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award

Jessica Mellon serves as the UME 4-H Professional Track Faculty member of Allegany County. In her role, she provides educational programs to Allegany county youth, with a focus on STEM and robotics. Jessica is also committed to providing inclusive programming to meet the needs of youth with different abilities. Her inclusion strategies in programs such as the Gold Star program, have been replicated by her peers across the state.

Jessica has been very intentional about expanding opportunities through partnerships with the local school system and the local Maryland Round Business Table (MRBT). Such efforts have allowed her to expand STEM opportunities for youth across Allegany County. Participants in Jessica's programs have competed in national level robotics competitions. Her partnership with the MRBT has allowed youth to experience the Summer of STEM—an internship program first established in Baltimore County 4-H.

In 2020, Jessica represented Maryland 4-H on the North East Region 4-H Virtual Programs committee. Under her leadership, Jessica was able to coalesce the expertise of dozens of 4-H faculty, staff, and volunteers to host over 10 new clubs reaching hundreds of youth across the state. Virtual clubs were quite diverse in programming with topics such as environmental education, science experiments, livestock education, and global exploration.

Jessica also quickly pivoted to meet the needs of youth while in-person programs were restricted. During the pandemic, she was seen as a leader across the state in developing and producing educational videos and STEM challenges hosted on YouTube.



On-campus Junior Faculty Award

Dr. Neslihan Uler is an exceptional colleague, teacher, and researcher. She has selected interesting and strategic research projects, and discovered important results addressing issues of long-standing interest to economists and of critical importance. Her current research on the effect of armed conflict on economic preferences is relevant for thinking about the design of economic policies and support for war-torn regions. She also has a paper that informs the optimal public policy related to COVID-19. Another examines ways to improve climate change policy.

She has published her research in the top 10 journals in economics as well as top field journals in experimental economics. Her work on charitable giving has given rise to collaborations with leading figures in the field nationally and internationally.

As chair of AREC's seminar committee, she has been instrumental in bringing many prominent economists to campus (including a recent Nobel prize winner), benefiting faculty and graduate students through cutting edge research presentations and small discussions as well as enhancing the university's prestige within the economics profession.

She designed a graduate course on Experimental Methods that is quite popular. Her commitment to undergraduates has led to her introduction of new instructional methods to improve learning outcomes. She has published important and policy relevant research, developed new classes and advised students, and provided exceptional service to the department and professional organizations, helping to successfully raise the visibility of the Agricultural and Resource Economics program.



Off-campus Junior Faculty Award

Dr. Sarah Hirsh was hired in August of 2018 as the Extension Educator for UME in the program area of Agriculture and Food Systems. Located in the Somerset County office with responsibilities on the lower shore and throughout Maryland, she brings to UME an extensive background in soil and watershed science.

As a new faculty member, Dr. Hirsh quickly adapted to the lower shore gaining an understanding of the area, agriculture crops, and clientele. She applied her knowledge of soils, cover crops and production systems to create an effective outreach and education program. Along with a number of applied research projects, she has developed a comprehensive program that marries scholarship, teaching, and service.

Dr. Hirsh is a skilled educator that focuses on the target audience, educational needs and instructional design. Her program has reached 4,237 participants with 108 programs and presentations. Her emphasis is on soil, cover crops, conservation, nutrient management, agriculture education, weed management and pesticide education. Dr. Hirsh is currently active on a number of research/grant projects with a total of close to \$1M. In each of the activities, Dr. Hirsh has a leadership or large role in the execution and success of the project.



Faculty Research Award

Dr. George Belov has made significant contributions by obtaining several major extramural NIH R01 and R21 grants, totaling approximately \$5 million, to support his research programs since 2010. He has co-authored more than 50 scientific papers published in peer-reviewed journals including *Cell*, *Cell Host and Microbe*, *PloS Pathogens*, and *Journal of Virology*, etc.

Dr. Belov has established an outstanding research program focusing on picornaviruses including foot and mouth disease virus, poliovirus, rhinoviruses, and many others, which can cause significant public health and economic burden. Dr. Belov and his colleagues have identified critical mechanisms, which these viruses rely on to induce the formation of replication organelles, specialized membranous structures that harbor the viral replication complexes. Targeting cellular proteins hijacked by picornaviruses for their development allows for controlling the replication of diverse viruses. Another important direction of Dr. Belov's research is the development of novel vaccines, including those that may protect against distantly related viruses. Overall, Dr. Belov's research represents an authentic program reflecting significant scholarly research.

In addition to his research, Dr. Belov is a wonderful mentor. His students and postdocs have been recruited as faculty members in top institutions. He is also a delightful colleague and faculty member. He is willing to assist others and commit his valuable time to serve on different committees. He is considered an extraordinary faculty member and colleague and an asset to the Vet Med department and the entire UMD community.



Paul R. Poffenberger Excellence in Teaching and Advising Award

Since joining the Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA) faculty in January 2018, **Dr. Heather McHale** has demonstrated exemplary character, leadership, and commitment to students and their success.

The many options that the IAA offers creates a complex tangle of paths for students wishing to pursue degrees at UMD. Dr. McHale was able to combine nine different certificate tracks with dozens of degree options to create efficient academic paths for students to earn two UMD credentials: a Certificate in Applied Agriculture, and a BS degree.

Dr. McHale advises students in UMD's Agriculture Forward, a program that enables students to pursue both a Certificate in Applied Agriculture and a bachelor's degree at the same time. She spent enormous amounts of time building the advising guides for Agriculture Forward students. The guides she developed have become a valuable resource for students and other advisors.

This past year, Dr. McHale taught 6 courses, advised 21 students, mentored new faculty, created an advising handbook, and personally met with dozens of prospective students and their parents to help recruit them into the IAA and AGNR. Her focus on academic success for Agriculture Forward and all IAA students is made clear through her teaching. Her commitment to inclusion and equity in the classroom, as well as incorporating dynamic teaching tools such as Adobe Spark, help build essential foundational skills and confidence in her students.

Dr. McHale truly exemplifies excellence in both teaching and advising within a larger commitment to the mission of our college.



Dean Gordon Cairns Award for Distinguished Creative Work and Teaching in Agriculture

Shannon Dill has conducted research and teaching in farm and agribusiness management, farm stress management, women in agriculture, new and beginning farmer success, and student and faculty development. She has developed and adapted enterprise budgets, new teaching programs and techniques, conducted needs assessments, quantified Extension's impact in Maryland, and promoted faculty and workforce development.

An example of Shannon's work is her leadership of the Annie's Project and MidAtlantic Women in Agriculture programs that have reached over 600 participants since 2008. Survey respondents estimated the increased profitability from their participation ranged from \$2,387 to \$3,995 per person. More importantly, the network created for women producers has been invaluable.

A portion of Shannon's faculty development work has been the provision of grant support that helped shift the AgFS Program culture, particularly for junior faculty, to leadership of extramural funding efforts that support their applied research and outreach work. The past three years have seen an increase in AgFS-led projects from less than \$500,000 for 2015–17 to over \$2.4 million for 2019–21. Shannon has served as AGNR ADVANCE Professor the past two years, influencing programming to support the recruitment, retention, advancement, and professional growth of a diverse faculty. She has been an excellent mentor of junior and senior faculty and frequently teaches at AgFS Program in-services. Her work has been recognized by her peers through numerous excellence awards during her time with UME.



DEIR Standard of Excellence Award

An assistant professor in ENST, **Dr. Candice Duncan** started in ENST as a lecturer under a unique mentorship program to improve her skills in teaching and research in 2017. She excelled in this program, and her work and productivity resulted in a 29-0 faculty vote to recommend her for the university's FAMILE program, an initiative to add 100 underrepresented faculty members to tenure track ranks over 10 years. Her integration into and support from the department shows both her excellence as well as the embrace of DEIR by the entire department.

Dr. Duncan brings a passion to DEIR. She is a Co-PI on two NSF funded projects that focus on increasing the diversity of graduate students in STEM fields. She has been highly successful and two graduate students are currently funded under her Geosciences project. As a new assistant professor, she is committed to increasing the pipeline of diverse students to the PhD, and is recruiting students from HBCUs.

Dr. Duncan is a member of the ENST Diversity and Equity Committee that produced the department's DEIR living document that serves as the gold standard for AGNR departmental commitment to DEIR. She and that team received the Bahram Momen Distinguished Service Award, ENST's highest award, for their work. Dr. Duncan worked hard on the development of a mentoring plan, required for the FAMILE program, that will improve all new assistant professor mentoring in the future in ENST.

THE 2022 CORNERSTONE AWARDS



Healthy Food Systems

External Award

Millington-Crumpton Food Pantry



Clean and Healthy Chesapeake Bay

Internal Award

Bay-Wise Landscape Management



Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems

External Award

Maryland Agriculture Council - Taste of Maryland

Internal Award

Agriculture Law Education Initiative



Human, Animal, and Environmental Health

None



Optimize Urban Environments

Internal Award

Algal Ecotechnology Center

External Award

Freetown Walkable Watershed Initiative

DEAN'S GRANTSMANSHIP AWARDS

George Belov

Iqbal Hamza

Byung-Eun Kim

Stephanie Lansing

Utpal Pal

Yiping Qi

Vijay Tiwari

Gurpal Toor

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION 2022

5 YEARS

Dave Kenny
Christa Carignan
Thomas L. Eason
William Charles Eversfield
Jessica Maria Karunaratne
Liz Laher
Tiffany Nicole Moore
Kristena L. Ratcliffe
Paul R. Rickert
Melissa Ann Russell
Norma Janet Sanchez
Brian Roy Schnebly
Racheal Slattery
Diane Lewis Timmons
Lisa Trice
Todd Alan Waters
Tianfan Wen

10 YEARS

April E. Brohawn
Christopher L. Behnke
Amy R. Brueckmann
Jamie L. Fleming

Judy M. Knight
Elma Ruth Koster
Maria L. Liberati
Aly J. Valentine

15 YEARS

Ann J. Leger
Kristin A. Stenson
Amanda Brown Clougherty
Raymond Thomas Harrison, III
Tam Nhut Ong

20 YEARS

Judy K. Cooper
Dee Dee Allen
Richard W. Gomez
Fred Adolph Senkbeil

25 YEARS

John W. Dulin
Rubie Gonzales Mize

30 YEARS

Barbara A. Fisher

35 YEARS

Carole A. Dingess



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