



COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES

Member Handbook

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Introduction

What is Symons Squad, you may ask? You've been selected to be part of a special group of young alumni to build the future of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) at the University of Maryland. As a member of Symons Squad, you will help us spread the word about AGNR and all we have to offer to prospective students, your community, and more. In addition, you'll get to build your own professional network and advance the future of the college. We will provide you the tools and resources to represent AGNR in everything you do! You'll even receive recognition for your hard work as a Symons Squad member with special swag and invitations to events.

Objectives

- Involve young alumni (aimed at alumni under 40) in student recruitment and retention
 - Provide alumni recruitment messages that align with college recruitment strategies
 - Reward alumni for recruitment efforts
- Develop young alumni as ambassadors for AGNR in their communities, workplaces, and with stakeholder groups
 - Provide messages that align with college priorities
 - Provide opportunities for building professional networks and collaborations
 - Share celebrations and successes of alumni for the impact they are making in the agriculture and natural resources field
- Engage young alumni in academic opportunities and strategic initiatives of the college
 - Share opportunities to get involved with the college
 - Recognize participation in college events
 - Send regular updates on what the college is up to
 - Build the AGNR alumni network by sharing opportunities and ways to connect with current students

Outcomes

- Generate prospective student leads
- Increase yield rates and retention rates
- Increase AGNR visibility and that of alumni in their communities
- Increase alumni attendance at events
- Increase awareness of AGNR programs and initiatives
- Generate engagement
- Provide networking opportunities

Your Mission:

1. **Get connected** - Follow the College of AGNR on social media - Facebook ([@UMDAGNR](#)), Twitter ([@UMD_AGNR](#)), Instagram ([@umd_agnr](#)), and [YouTube](#).
2. **Get even more connected!** - Follow the AGNR Alumni Network on social media - Facebook ([@AGNRAlumni](#)), Twitter ([@AGNRalumni](#)) and Instagram ([@umdagnralumni](#))
3. **Get informed** - Review this handbook to understand your role, learn more about AGNR, and where to get resources to share.
4. **Get organized** - Check out our calendar for opportunities for you to represent, connect, and recruit.
5. **Get busy** - Go out into the world and share what you're doing!
6. **Report back** - Share with us your efforts by filling out our Action Report form each time you share, represent, connect, and more! We want to see what you've been doing to put AGNR out into the world.

So get started already!

1. Post about your new membership status in #SymonsSquad on Facebook and tag [@AGNRAlumni](#) and [@UMDAGNR](#). Take a photo of yourself in your AGNR gear and/or share a link to (create a go link to alumni page). If someone asks you, tell them what Symons Squad is!
2. Tweet about your new membership status in #SymonsSquad on Twitter and tag [@AGNRAlumni](#) and [@UMD_AGNR](#). Share a link to our page!
3. Post about your new membership status in #SymonsSquad on Instagram and tag [@umdagnralumni](#) and [@umd_agnr](#). Share a photo of why you love AGNR!
4. Display your Symons Squad swag wherever you go!
5. Let us know opportunities in your community or region to share AGNR and get connected with other Squad members!

Your Role

Symons Squad is a volunteer initiative. As a member, AGNR will provide you with resources and information to represent the college in recruitment and professional network building. You are volunteering as a passionate alumni of AGNR who wants to spread the word about your experience to inspire future AGNR Terps!

Please be sure to review items in this handbook covering your role in student recruitment, network building, and awareness as well as important guidelines relating to representing AGNR and the University of Maryland. If you have questions, contact the Symons Squad Team (symonssquad@umd.edu) for more information.

Tools to Get You Started

- Quarterly email newsletter with up-to-date information on college news and highlights of fellow Symons Squad members
- Accessible Symons Squad Team to answer all your questions and be your resource for this initiative (symonssquad@umd.edu)
- Online resources and information for potential students interested in AGNR
- #SymonsSquad Starter Swag:
 - Mug
 - Pin
 - Sticker
 - Pennant
 - Polo/t-shirt
 - Nametag

We'll host an annual Kick-off Session during the summer each year to get you engaged, connected, prepped, and ready to conquer the world!

Important to note: as this is a volunteer initiative, AGNR and Symons Squad are not able to provide reimbursement for your efforts. Travel expenses for your participation in events and initiatives are NOT eligible for reimbursement. If there is something you need, please get in touch with the Symons Squad Team (symonssquad@umd.edu).

Your Role in Recruitment

Student Recruiting

As a member of Symons Squad, you are tasked with sharing your story to future students and the community. By serving as an ambassador for AGNR, you will impact the next generations of students to come.

Your role in recruitment is two-fold: share your story with prospective students and connect with our admitted students to help them make their college decision. We know your stories will have a strong impact on the students you meet with. After applications are submitted and students receive their admission decision, the next phase in the process is called yield. This is the most critical point in a student's college decision making as we know they have applied to many schools and have to choose which one is the best fit. We ultimately want them to choose AGNR at UMD! Increasing applications and then in turn yield for AGNR is a high priority for Dean Beyrouthy, which is why we need your help!

Key Talking Points

We know there are so many reasons to become an AGNR Terp as do you, so let's get to sharing! As AGNR is very diverse in its academic programs and career paths, we've prepared a list of our key talking points and important facts and figures for you to represent AGNR as a college.

1. University's Cornerstone College - Founded in 1856, AGNR embodies the land-grant mission of the university focusing on sound science, groundbreaking research, and Maryland pride.
2. Committed to eliminating hunger and malnutrition, preserving our natural resources, improving quality of life, and empowering the next generation.
3. Hands on applied learning - With STEM degrees in the applied life sciences, all 8 of our undergraduate majors (and the many concentrations within them!) provide students the opportunity to directly apply their coursework to real world problems in labs, the campus farm, and our community.
4. Best of both worlds - AGNR has the resources of a large school, but the feel of a small community with only 1,200 undergraduates.
5. Prime location and connections - Located right outside of DC and Baltimore, AGNR is in a prime location to federal agencies, nonprofits, state agencies and

more. We boast one of the highest (95%) placement rates upon graduation - full time employment, graduate/professional school, part time/service/contractual.

Important Facts & Figures

- AGNR Rooftop Statement:
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.
- Strategic Initiatives:
 - Establish a Healthy Food System and Ensure Global Food and Nutritional Security
 - Ensure a Clean and Healthy Chesapeake Bay
 - Optimize Urban Environments Through Design, Green Technology, and Community Engagement
 - Improve Human, Animal, and Environmental Health
 - Advance Innovative, Profitable, and Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems
- Size: 1,200 undergraduates
- Academic Programs - STEM-based, applied life sciences approach to solving some of the most pressing challenges of our changing world
 - Agricultural and Resource Economics (AREC)
 - Business Management
 - Environmental Economics
 - Animal Sciences (ANSC)
 - Animal Care and Management
 - Combined Ag/Vet Degree (3-year program)
 - Sciences/Pre-Professional
 - Plant Sciences (PLSC)
 - Plant Science (Plant Biology)
 - Turf and Golf Course Management
 - Urban Forestry
 - Agricultural Science and Technology (AGST)
 - Agronomy
 - Environmental Horticulture
 - Agricultural & Extension Education
 - Landscape Architecture (LARC)
 - Nutrition and Food Science (NFSC)
 - Nutritional Science
 - Food Science

- Dietetics
 - Environmental Science and Technology (ENST)
 - Ecological Technology and Design
 - Environmental Health
 - Soil and Watershed Science
 - Natural Resource Management
 - Environmental Science and Policy (ENSP)
 - Environment and Agriculture
 - Environmental Economics
 - Soil, Water, and Land Resources
 - Wildlife Ecology and Management
 - Global Environmental Change*
 - Land Use*
 - Marine and Coastal Management*
 - Environmental Politics and Policy*
 - Society and Environmental Issues*
 - Biodiversity and Conservation Biology*
 - Earth Surface Process*

* indicates concentration housed outside of AGNR

- Scholarships
 - New freshmen apply by March 1, notified mid-late March
 - New transfer students apply by May 1 (same as current students)
 - Most awards range between \$2,500-5,000 and students can reapply each year
 - We award over \$250,000 in scholarships each year
- 2019 Career Placement
 - 95% placement rate within 6 months of graduation
 - 56% employed full-time
 - 30% continuing education
 - 9% employed part-time, contractual, or service-program (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, etc.)
 - Veterinary School Pathways
 - The Animal Sciences major offers 2 options:
 - Sciences/Pre-Professional - apply to vet school SENIOR year
 - Combined Ag/Vet Degree - apply to vet school JUNIOR year
 - On average 80% of those applying to vet school gain admission to at least one – the national average is below 40%
 - The ANSC curriculum provides in-depth hands-on experience that makes our students highly qualified for veterinary school – students

can gain experience in large, companion, and exotic animals while at UMD.

- Other Pre-Professional Programs
 - Pharmacy
 - Law
 - Dentistry
 - Medicine
 - Physician Assistant
 - Nursing
 - Dietetics
- The Institute of Applied Agriculture
 - Offers 60-credit non-degree certificates
 - Focus on practical entrepreneurial and technical skills in the agricultural industry
 - For the most part, equivalent to an associate's degree
 - Areas of Study:
 - Agricultural Business Management
 - Sustainable Agriculture
 - Leadership and Communication
 - Turfgrass Management
 - Golf Course Management
 - Sports Turf Management
 - Ornamental Horticulture
 - Landscape Management
 - Two pathways for students also interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree: Certificate-first and Agriculture Forward
- Beyond the classroom
 - AGNR Student Council and its 19 member clubs
 - Dean's Student Advisory Council
 - Study abroad
 - Academic support

Your Role in Network Building

As you remember your time as a student, you know how critical networks are in pursuing your career. Networking is an essential part of everyone's professional and personal path. As a Symons Squad member your challenge is to share your network with our students and with fellow AGNR alums. Below are ideas for how to share your network!

Be an ambassador for AGNR in your community and workplace by engaging in:

- Community Building
 - Participate in civic groups or other community-based organizations and wear your Symons Squad gear
 - Plan and lead community service activities
 - Host/plan social gatherings of AGNR Terps for game watches, pumpkin picking, meetups at county fairs, etc.

- Provide opportunities for building professional networks & collaborations with students and fellow AGNR Alums
 - Share job & internship opportunities with AGNR Students via [Careers4Terps](#) or encourage your employer to [recruit](#) entry talent on campus
 - Participate in career panels, resume critiques, mock interview programs
 - Offer short-term job shadowing opportunities through our [Intern For a Day Program](#)
 - Serve as a mentor for [AG Enterprise Challenge](#) teams
 - Attend AGNR signature programs like *Discovery & Innovation Night*
 - Plan/host meetups for AGNR Terps at conferences and meetings
 - Share your career background or experience through an informational interview via [Terrapins Connect](#)
 - Collaborate with AGNR student groups to present employment skills or career opportunities during club meetings.

- Sharing celebrations and successes of alumni for the impact they are making in the agriculture and natural resources field
 - Submit AGNR Alumni Shout-Outs for yourself and other AGNR Terps on professional and personal accomplishments on the AGNR alumni website
 - Utilize social media channels to like, post, comment and share using [#umdagnr](#) [#symonssquad](#)

Your Role in Raising Awareness

As a member of Symons Squad, you can help us by raising awareness of the programs, research, and amazing work our faculty, staff and students are doing to better the state of Maryland and beyond. Help us share these stories by reposting on your social media pages, volunteering, attending AGNR conferences and meetings and more. See below ideas for how you can raise awareness of what our land-grant institution is doing!

Strategic Initiatives

- The College of Agriculture & Natural Resources has five strategic initiatives:
 - Establish a health food system and ensure global food and nutritional security
 - Ensure a clean and healthy Chesapeake Bay
 - Advance, Innovative, Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Systems
 - Improve Human, Animal and Environmental Health
 - Optimize Urban Environments through Design, Green Technology and Community Engagement
- Symons Squad members can reach out to Strategic Initiatives co-chairs and provide connections to support the goals associated with each initiative
- Cornerstone Event- Each fall the college hosts a Cornerstone Event highlighting the work we are doing in a strategic initiative. This is an opportunity to connect with professionals, AGNR, community and government stakeholders to increase College presence and impact around that initiative.

Research

- Sharing research developments via your social media & professional networks
- Sharing AGNR updates with contacts & stakeholders via social media & professional networks

Symons Squad Calendar & Activities

Calendar of Events

As a Symons Squad member, you are expected to participate in the annual Symons Squad Kickoff Event each summer.

Be sure to check the Symons Squad website and emails about upcoming events to participate with AGNR. In addition to AGNR events, please consider attending events in your community (like 4-H, FFA, Envirothon, youth programs, etc.) and representing Symons Squad to spread awareness of AGNR. Use the Action Report Form to keep us up to date on all the awesome events you've attended representing Symons Squad!

Share Your Activities

We'd like you to send us updates about activities you've done on behalf of AGNR. Use this link to fill out a short Action Report update about what you did. We will email you quarterly with Symons Squad updates and reminders to send us your activities.

[Action Report](#)

For example, did you:

- Share social media posts?
- Post using #symonssquad?
- Judge a county or state fair exhibit/show?
- Attend an AGNR event?
- Participate in a club/county/regional/ state/national 4-H or FFA Event?
- Attend a professional conference?
- Refer a student for recruitment to AGNR?
- Speak about AGNR to students? Stakeholders? Colleagues?
- Participate in a University of Maryland Extension workshop or class?
- Attend events in your community? For ex. Farm Bureau meetings, conventions & events
- Volunteer in your community?
- Participate in a local STEM fair or career event for middle or high school students?

Helpful Links

General University of Maryland Information

- About UMD - <https://admissions.umd.edu/explore/about-umd>
- UMD Admissions Requirements - <https://admissions.umd.edu/apply/admission-requirements>
- UMD application Deadlines - <https://admissions.umd.edu/apply/application-deadlines>
- UMD Application FAQs - <https://www.admissions.umd.edu/apply/application-faqs>
- Cost of Attendance - <https://admissions.umd.edu/finance>
- Scholarships and Financial Aid - <https://financialaid.umd.edu/>
- Requesting Information about UMD - <https://admissions.umd.edu/explore/join-mailing-list>
- UMD Majors - <https://admissions.umd.edu/explore/majors>
- Visiting UMD - <https://admissions.umd.edu/visit>
- Career Services - <https://careers.umd.edu>
- Education Abroad - <https://globalmaryland.umd.edu/offices/education-abroad>
- Department of Residence Life - <http://reslife.umd.edu/housing/>

AGNR Information

- AGNR Website - agnr.umd.edu
- UMD Extension - <https://extension.umd.edu/>
- Requesting Information about AGNR - <https://agnr.umd.edu/admissions/request-information>
- AGNR Majors - <https://agnr.umd.edu/academics/programs-study>
- Visiting AGNR - go.umd.edu/visitagnr
- Career Services - <https://agnr.umd.edu/student-opportunities/internships-careers>
- Education Abroad - <https://agnr.umd.edu/student-opportunities/study-abroad>
- AGNR Clubs & Organizations - <https://agnr.umd.edu/student-opportunities/clubs-and-organizations>
- AGNR Scholarships - <https://agnr.umd.edu/admissions/scholarships>
- AGNR Financial Aid - <https://agnr.umd.edu/admissions/financial-aid>

Student Recruiting Guidelines

Your role in recruiting will help guide students and their families in knowing they made the best college choice. As an ambassador for AGNR, you are a role model for these students in helping them connect to the AGNR community and feel at home at UMD.

Your responsibilities as a Symons Squad recruiter:

1. Your role is to give information & share your experience - focus on your experience and the facts of the college, painting the whole picture for a student. This handbook should provide you with an overview of AGNR, and don't be afraid to refer the student to us (see below).
2. Don't lie - if you don't know something, that is OK! You volunteered to showcase your experience as a Terp and the career path it led you on. The Symons Squad Team is here to help answer any questions (symonssquad@umd.edu).
3. Refer questions to appropriate contacts - again if you don't know something, that is OK! The Recruitment Team is happy to be the referral for any prospective or admitted student - please connect them to FutureAGNR@umd.edu.
4. Don't accept money - again, this is a volunteer role so you should not be accepting money or bribes from prospective or admitted students.
5. Keep us informed - Let us know when you are attending an event and representing AGNR. Make sure to complete the Action Report and inform us of any contacts you had with prospective or admitted students.
6. Don't feel you have to know everything - you can admit you don't know and refer them to the Symons Squad Team! We'd rather you refer a student than give misinformation. Know the important basics (admissions, dates, where to find the application, etc.), but don't answer questions about the application review process.

Admissions Code of Ethics and Professional Practice

<https://www.nacacnet.org/advocacy--ethics/NACAC-Code-of-Ethics/>

As members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), we follow these principles in ethically recruiting students. These guidelines are critical in being truthful and transparent, conducting ourselves professionally, and respecting confidentiality. Feel free to read more at the link above and let the Symons Squad Team know if you have any questions regarding these guidelines and your role.

Recruiting and the NCAA

www.ncaa.org

If you come across a student interested in being recruited, please refer them to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Athletics here:

<https://umterps.com/sports/2013/6/12/208318462.aspx>. Any representative of the university must refer questions about the institution's athletics programs to the athletic department staff. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this, please get in touch with the Symons Squad Team.

Recommending a Student?

If you know a student in your community or meet one at an event that is interested in AGNR, please complete this [Recruitment Information Form](#) so the Symons Squad Team can follow up and email us if you have any questions (symonssquad@umd.edu).

Common Student FAQs

- What Majors does UMD have?
 - With over 90 undergraduate majors across 12 colleges, we have you covered.
- How big is your school (aka how many students?)
 - 30,000 + undergraduate students
 - 40,000+ students (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- What is the Student-to-teacher ratio?
 - 18:1
- Athletics and Clubs?
 - 20 NCAA Division I teams & 800+ campus clubs and organizations
- Greek Life
 - 17% of the undergraduate population with 56 registered chapters.
- Do students study abroad?
 - Many students study abroad - we offer programs to nearly every travel-safe country on six continents
- How many residence halls are there?
 - 37 residence halls on campus. Freshman are guaranteed housing as long as they meet the May 1 commitment deadline.
- Can students park on campus?
 - Parking is reserved for upperclassmen students, Freshmen can no longer have cars unless they are commuters.
- How is the food?
 - UMD offers unlimited anytime dining (all you can eat) at its 3 full-service dining halls (to those with meal plans)
 - Campus can accommodate nearly any dietary restrictions including Kosher, Vegan, and allergy-free diets.

Highlight these facts:

- UMD is the Flagship University in the State of Maryland- we're the largest, most competitive, and most well known
- We are a large Big Ten school with Division 1 athletics
- UMD is located in College Park, MD
- We are 4 miles outside of DC, transit is available! DC is great for internships, jobs, networking, and social opportunities.

Symons Squad Team Contact Info

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