



Executive Summary
Merit Badge University
at
West Virginia University



MBU@WVU 2020

West Virginia University again hosted Merit Badge University (MBU @ WVU) in collaboration with the local Mountaineer Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America on February 22, 2020. There were 343 youth, ages 11 through 17, registered for this one-day event, working on 391 merit badges. Of these Scouts, 57% were from the 12 counties of BSA's Mountaineer Area Council (MAC), with another 3% from elsewhere in WV, while the remainder were from four other states. MBU is a regional event. An array of activities such as hands-on science demos (WVU Science Behind the Sport), interactive team challenges (WVU Science Adventure School), and water quality analysis (Dr. Dave Smaldone) greeted the Scouts during the morning registration period and at lunchtime. The Mountaineer welcomed and offered remarks to the Scouts, leaders, and parents at the morning opening ceremony. New this year, tours and on-campus activities were arranged and offered to parents and other adults.

There were 25 different merit badges offered, in 26 classes, ranging from Sustainability, Programming, Robotics, Fingerprinting, Journalism, and Moviemaking, to Dentistry, Law, Nuclear Science, and Emergency Preparedness, among others. In offering these badges, there were 28 WVU faculty, staff, and graduate students who were instructors and assistants, alongside 7 alumni and other community supporters, with 14 undergraduate assistants. Adult leader training was offered by MAC's VP of Training, Paul White, MAC Commissioner Ralph Herron, and MAC Assistant Commissioner Gary Maffioli.

A steering committee chaired by Dan McNeil, Eberly Professor of Public Service, guided WVU's MBU, and included Alison Conroy from WVU's Strategic Youth Development Initiatives and Andrew Hoover from WVU's Science Behind the Sport program, both of whom provided considerable administrative support. Also serving on the committee were Don Miller, Ken Shanes, Tony Wayne, Jo Stanley, and Jennifer Selfridge. Logistical and other support for MBU @ WVU 2020 was provided by Greg Corio, Assistant Vice President of Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative. Also involved were faculty, staff, and students from the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences; Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design; College of Business & Economics; School of Medicine; and the University Police. WVU's BSA Partnership/ Scouting Initiative provided patches for Scouts and volunteers, as well as other support. WVU units and community sponsors helped support this year's MBU, including the WVU Center for Service and Learning, Hearts of Gold Service Dogs, Literati Information Technology, and Pepsico; the US Air Force provided a football toss "blow up" game. Accompanied by parents or Scout leaders, and with the WVU Rec Center as a base, Scouts traveled across campuses with WVU Student Guides, experiencing campus life. MBU brings together units throughout the University as "ONE WVU."

Student organizations mobilized to help register and guide Scouts at MBU, including Psychology Club, Psi Chi Psychology Honorary, and Lambda Omicron/Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity. Helping to realize WVU's teaching mission, MBU provided a venue for didactic training provided for adult Scout leaders. There was a senior undergraduate WVU senior service intern, Sarah Lipinski, along with interns Michael Dragone and Will McNeil, who were involved with MBU @ WVU. They provided support for the event and learned about serving and teaching youth, and mobilizing volunteers. Significant support for MBU was provided by the WVU Rec Center, particularly Ben Orendorff, as well as the Mountaineer Area Council professional staff, including Scout Executive Scott Hanson and others, along with volunteer adult Scout leader guides. MBU helps fulfill WVU's service mission, and allows youth a WVU college campus experience, which is a significant recruiting opportunity for WVU to reach talented, high-performing youth who will be considering college choices. Plans are underway for MBU @ WVU 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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