



**Executive Summary**  
Merit Badge University  
at  
West Virginia University



**MBU@WVU 2021**

West Virginia University again supported Merit Badge University (MBU@WVU) in collaboration with the local Mountaineer Area Council (MAC) of the Boy Scouts of America on February 20, 2021. This year brought new challenges as we worked to find a safe way to offer a limited number of in-person Merit Badges while in a global pandemic. This year, MAC was the forward-facing entity putting on the event while WVU supported with volunteers, planning, and administrative support. Through the support of the local community, we utilized 3 locations (St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Star City, Mylan Park's Hazel & J.W. Ruby Community Center, and MAC's Camp Mountaineer) to host our scouts.

There were 71 Scouts, ages 11 through 17 (20 at St. Mary's, 28 at Mylan Park, and 23 at Camp Mountaineer) who attended this one-day event, working on 79 merit badges. Due to Covid-19 safety precautions, only Scouts from MAC were allowed to participate this year. Also due to safety, we eliminated the mass gathering and mid-day events that are traditionally a part of MBU@WVU. In lieu of the traditional opening ceremony, an email was sent out the day prior with reminders for the scouts as well as a welcome video from WVU President Gordon Gee. At the start of each merit badge class, a Scout led the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Following the event and accompanying the notification of badge requirement completion, a thank you video from MAC President Daniel McNeil will be emailed to participants.

There were 8 different merit badges offered, in 11 classes. The 2021 badges were Citizenship in the World, Crime Prevention, Emergency Preparedness, Fingerprinting, Law, Public Health, Robotics, and Sustainability. In offering these badges, there were 17 WVU faculty, staff, and graduate students who were instructors and assistants.

This year, Dan McNeil, Eberly Professor of Public Service, served as the senior advisor on the MBU steering committee as he transitioned from his role as the lead event coordinator. Professor McNeil has done an extraordinary job at growing the footprint of this impactful event. Dan McNeil will also be retiring from his position as the President of the Mountaineer Area Council this week and is succeeded by Dr. Lee Pyles, another WVU professional and long-time MBU@WVU supporter.

A steering committee was co-chaired by Alison Conroy, Program Coordinator for the Brad and Alys Smith's Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative (OEDC); and Andrew Hoover, Director of WVU's Science Behind the Sport program; and included Dan McNeil, Eberly Professor of Public Service, who was the senior advisor to the transition of MBU@WVU's leadership. Also serving on the committee were Amy Garbrick, WVU Executive Assistant to the President's Office and VP of Programming for MAC, who provided considerable administrative and event support; Scott Hanson, Scout Executive for MAC, who provided event leadership support and counsel; and Greg Corio, Assistant Vice President of the Brad and Alys Smith's Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative, who provided logistical support and advisement. 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; General Counsel; and the University Police. Significant support for MBU was provided by Mountaineer Area Council professional staff along with volunteer adult Scout leader guides including Jennifer Selfridge and Gary Telerico. WVU's BSA Partnership/ Scouting Initiative provided patches for Scouts and volunteers, as well as other support. This year's event was made possible by the generous support of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Mylan Park, and Mountaineer Area Council's Camp Mountaineer by providing host locations.

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 2022 and its return to WVU campus.

Respectfully submitted,

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