



Report on
Merit Badge University at
West Virginia University



MBU @ WVU 2017

West Virginia University again hosted Merit Badge University (MBU @ WVU) in collaboration with the local Mountaineer Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the Black Diamond Council, Girl Scouts, on February 25, 2017. There were 326 Boy and Girl Scouts, ages 11 through 17, in attendance at this one-day event, a 16% increase from last year and the greatest number ever known to attend MBU @ WVU. Of these Scouts, 46% were from Monongalia, Marion, Preston, or Taylor counties, with another 19% from elsewhere in West Virginia, while the remainder were from four other states. MBU is a regional event.

There were 21 different merit badges offered, ranging from Engineering, Citizenship in the Nation, Medicine, Robotics, Fingerprinting, and Veterinary Medicine (through the WVU Farm and Hillcrest Veterinary Clinic), to Cooking, Sustainability, Journalism, and Space Exploration (provided by the NASA IV & V program), among others. In offering these merit badges, there were 23 WVU faculty, staff, and upper level students who were instructors and assistants, alongside 9 alumni and other community supporters who also provided expertise.

A steering committee chaired by Dan McNeil, Eberly Professor of Public Service, guides WVU's MBU, and includes Ken Shanes, Don Miller, Kim Helmick, and Tony Wayne. Strong logistical and other support for MBU @ WVU 2017 was provided by Greg Corio, Executive Director for Campus Recreation and Outdoor Education, as well as Cate Schlobohm and Ryan Sigler of the Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, and Kim Helmick of the School of Medicine. Also involved were the Office of Admissions, as well as faculty, staff, and students from the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences; Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design; Reed College of Media; College of Business & Economics; School of Dentistry; School of Medicine; School of Pharmacy; and the University Police. WVU's BSA Partnership/Scouting Initiative and Jerry Lang provided patches for Scouts and volunteers, as well as other support. Accompanied by their parents or Scout leaders, and with the WVU Rec Center as a home base, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and American Heritage Girls traveled across campuses with WVU Student Guides, experiencing campus life. The WVU Mountaineer and Dance Team were on hand to welcome the Scouts; other activities included the STEM "Science behind the Sport" exhibition, therapy/service dogs, and a football toss with the US Air Force. MBU brings together faculty, staff, and students from 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, Lambda Omicron/Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, and Engineering ambassadors and Engineering clubs. Helping to realize WVU's teaching mission, MBU provided a venue for didactic training provided for adult Scout leaders. There were two undergraduate WVU service interns who were involved with MBU @ WVU, Cal Wilson and Nicole Pellegrino, along with graduate student, Tiffany Stutler. 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 Jeff Doty and others, along with volunteer adult Scout leader guides for every merit badge.

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 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel W. McNeil, PhD, *Coordinator of MBU @ WVU*, dmcneil@wvu.edu
Professor of Psychology, Eberly Family Professor of Public Service,
Clinical Professor of Dental Practice & Rural Health