



NASA WV SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER SPRING 2025 EDITION

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Falcotronix is the Robotics Club of Fairmont State University. WVSGC provides club support, and we are so proud of this team! Falcotronix competed in the 2025 VEX Robotics Competition, held February 21 at West Virginia University, where the Falcotronix team won the Tournament Finalists Award.

Earlier, the Falcotronix team found success while competing in the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) VEX U Robotics Tournament held February 14 in La Plata, Maryland. Falcotronix won ten out of twelve matches, putting them in second place in the competition. The team also won the Design Award in two out of four events. This is a prestigious designation given to teams that, beyond winning matches, have an organized, professional approach to the engineering design process and create innovative robots.

We are very proud to announce that the Falcotronix Robotics Club qualified for the 2025 VEX-U Robotics World Championships!

This is the third consecutive time that Falcotronix qualified for this prestigious international competition, which is reserved for the best 100 teams in the whole world and will take place in Dallas, TX in May 2025.

Pictured here: Professor Musat Crihalmeanu and Falcotronix team members, from left to right: Jacob Bonner, Nathan Barham, Zachary Bulatko, Joseph Topardo, Jack Savage, Garrett Clayton, Musat Crihalmeanu, and Paul Lucas.



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WV Council of Teachers of Mathematics

NASA WV Space Grant Consortium supported registration, hotel, and meal costs for 8 in-service and 3 pre-service educators to attend the annual conference on March 14-15.

Response from a teacher: I would like to thank the NASA WV Space Grant Consortium for funding my expenses to attend the conference. Through all of your generous funding and efforts, I was able to learn some fresh ideas to utilize in my classroom and make my teaching job a little easier. The sessions were very engaging, and now I am energized to try what I learned and share these tips with my colleagues. Thanks for a fantastic opportunity!

Girls STEM Day: Engineering Is Sweet!



On March 8th the Society of Women Engineers at WVU held a Girls STEM Day event on campus. WVS GC student workers, Mason Rittinger, Piper Dangerfield, and Angie Kash participated by hosting a DIY Ice Cream station inspired by Emily's Wonderlab book: "Stay Curious and Keep Exploring".

NASA Ambassador Matthew Fox: Research Week Presentation

The Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources Department of Industrial and Management Systems Engineering and the NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium presented a talk by doctoral student Matthew Fox. Fox shared his experience with the NASA WV Space Grant Consortium and discussed how the program contributes to his research.



Host Your Own NASA Day Recaps at Affiliates!

WVWC Space Day

On Sunday, March 30th, the West Virginia Wesleyan College Space Club hosted an event on campus for the community thanks to NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium. The physics, chemistry and biology departments came together under the direction of Dr. Tracey Delaney and filled the auxiliary gym with the magical wonder of science. Dr. Tracey Delaney expressed her enthusiasm about the revival of this cherished tradition. "This event has not taken place since 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic," she explained. "We are thrilled to bring it back to the community and hope to reestablish it as an annual occasion moving forward. It's an opportunity to connect, learn, and celebrate the spirit of discovery and innovation that unites us all."

Big thanks to our NASA Ambassador, Sonya Carper, for all of her effort and help making this event such a huge success!



Marshall University High School Science Day

On April 7, 2025, Marshall University welcomed 500 students from 14 different schools across the region to campus for their High School Science Day. The event was an amazing opportunity for students and teachers to participate in hands on and visually exciting demonstrations in the STEM fields. Students also had the opportunity so see the College of Science Scanning Electron Microscopes, the portable planetarium, and taste liquid nitrogen ice cream. Congratulations to Fairland High School on winning the ~\$200 photo resist 3D printer!



Host Your Own NASA Day Recaps at Affiliates Continued...

NASA IV&V ERC & FSU NASA Day 2025

NASA Day at the Robert H. Mollohan Research Center in Fairmont on April 10th was a success with 300 students from five schools in attendance. The students were welcomed by Director Wes Deadrick of NASA's Katherine Johnson IV&V Facility, and learned about the evolution of NASA's fastest satellite ever flown, the Parker Solar Probe, by Mission Systems Engineer John Wirzburger from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab (JUAPL). Following the presentation, students rotated through a dozen hands-on STEM stations led by 26 volunteers from A3L Federal Works, Aurora Flight Sciences, EASW, Kanawha County Schools, Fairmont State University, JUAPL, Marshall University's Advanced Manufacturing Center, NASA's IV&V Program, the SMART Centre, and WVU's Mechanical, Materials, & Aerospace Department. Activities included building and flying foam planes, completing a maze with Sphero robots, a robotic hockey match, launching rotocopters, taking a selfie at our infrared photo booth, playing with plasma, modeling supernovae, designing shapes with 3D printing pens, launching straw rockets, studying solar spectroscopy, and learning about Heliophysics in the digital Starlab. The event was organized by the NASA IV&V Education Resource Center with grant funding from the WV Space Grant Consortium.

- Dr. Todd Ensign, Program Manager at NASA IV&V Facility



West Liberty University SCI-FI Day 2025

The College of Science Recruitment Committee of West Liberty University hosted NASA Day in conjunction with the annual SCI FI, Science Classes I Find Interesting, event on Thursday, April 10th. One hundred thirty-one public, private, and homeschooled high school students attended the event. Students participated in their choice of two unique science classes that included, "Moon Mission," "DNA: Unlocking the Code with Chemistry," and "Nature's Arsenal: Fighting Cancer, One Plant at a Time," to name a few.

-Dr. Leslie Quinn, Associate Professor of Biology, West Liberty University



Congratulations to our 2025-2026 Proposal Winners

Faculty Awards

EPSCoR Seed Grant

- Dr. Boyd Rorabaugh-Marshall University
- Dr. Michael Hambuchen-Marshall University
- Dr. Pingping Zhu-Marshall University
- Dr. Zack Graham-West Liberty University
- Dr. Aniruddha Maiti-West Virginia State University
- Dr. Deniz Talan-West Virginia University
- Dr. Nicholas Szorcinski-West Virginia University
- Dr. Soumya Srivastava-West Virginia University

Research Initiation Grant

- Dr. Yongick Kim- Marshall University
- Dr. Holly Vopal- West Liberty University
- Dr. Chris Fowler- West Virginia University

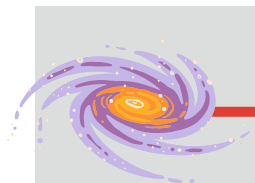
Student Awards

Graduate

- Elli Williams -Marshall University
- Julie Cardot -Marshall University
- Sidney Strause -Marshall University
- Zak Bartholomew -Marshall University
- Katherine Torrance -West Liberty University
- Foster Holmquist -West Virginia University
- Isabella Kudyba -West Virginia University
- Jackson Taylor- West Virginia University
- Nathaniel Pearson- West Virginia University
- Robert Cook- West Virginia University
- Tanner Hoffman -West Virginia University
- Trevor Smith -West Virginia University

Undergraduate

- Audrey Tobesman- Bethany College
- Abigail Roberts -Marshall University
- Asha Bora -Marshall University
- Dylan Lester -Marshall University
- Niko Faulcon Marshall University
- Marilyn Shamblen - Marshall University
- Samuel Sutphin -Marshall University
- Tanner Wick- Marshall University
- Alexa Bostic -West Virginia University
- Carlos Garcia Lugo-West Virginia University
- Henry Coyle- West Virginia University
- Jonah Forinash -West Virginia University



NEWSWORTHY HIGHLIGHT

LiftOff Summer Institute 2025

Two West Virginia teachers have been selected to participate in the LiftOff Summer Institute 2025: Flight Path to Innovation. They will join outstanding educators across the country, in Houston this summer, for a program that will connect them with the scientists and engineers at the forefront of space exploration. This program, sponsored by UT Austin Center for Space Research (UTCSR), emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning experiences by incorporating a space science theme supported by NASA missions. Teacher participants are provided with information and experiences through speakers, hands-on activities, and field investigations that promote space science and enrichment activities for themselves and others.

Congratulations to Michael Howell, Sherman High School Boone County, & Janet Cunningham, MCS West Side Elementary, Kanawha County, on this achievement!



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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SUMMER 2025 INTERNS!

Bailey Gilbert- Marshall University: Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences
David Griffin-West Virginia University: NASA Marshall Space Flight Center
Ian Copenhaver-West Virginia University: Neurowired, LLC
Izaak Whetsell- West Virginia University: NASA IV&V Facility
Makaila White- Marshall University: Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences
Michael Fraley- Fairmont State University: NASA IV&V ERC
Samantha Cochran- West Virginia State University: NASA IV&V Facility
Sarah Yearego- Fairmont State University: NASA IV&V ERC
William Blackwood-Fairmont State University: NASA IV&V Facility



ANNOUNCEMENTS



NASA Day RFP 2025-2026 RFP:

We are delighted to once again support NASA Day at Affiliates! The RFP is now OPEN for the 2025-2026 Academic year. [Click Here for More Information.](#)

NASA Affiliate Ambassador Program:

The Ambassador Program is now taking applications for 2025-2026 NASA Ambassadors! Please send to your students to apply. [Click here to Access the Application.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: Fall 2025 Board of Directors Meeting:

The 2025 Fall BOD meeting will be held virtually on Friday, October 17, 10AM-12PM. More information to come.

NASA WV Space Grant Team

Melanie C. Page, PhD Director
Candy Cordwell, Assistant Director
Kristina Angeline, Program Coordinator
Marlo Lively, Program Assistant



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