



PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026 · LEADERSHIP SEMINARS · DAY 1

Welcome and Vision

"The Standard and The Why"

Dr. Thomas L. Jones, Jr.

Director of University Bands · Saturday, August 1, 2026

The Hampton University Marching Force

HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT

Icebreaker

Before we talk about who we are and where we are going, take a minute and remember what this band can do.



Hampton at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

WAVY TV 10

youtu.be/ZC7VVKsBfyQ

WATCH · 1:12

Welcome, Leaders.

You set the standard before the membership arrives.

You reported a day ahead of the band for one reason: the standard starts with you.

- ◆ This weekend we align on **who we are**, **where we are going**, and **how we will operate** this year.
- ◆ Every session is short and direct—come ready to think, take notes, and buy in.
- ◆ By Monday, the members will follow what you **model** this weekend, not what we say.

Our charge for the next two days: leave here aligned, accountable, and ready to lead The Marching Force.

The Band by the Numbers

Every section that makes The Marching Force.

241

MEMBERS · 2026–2027

WINDS114

Trumpet	26
Sousaphone	18
Trombone	14
Alto Sax	13
Mellophone	11
Clarinet	11
Euphonium	6
Piccolo	6
Tenor Sax	5
Baritone	4

DRUMLINE50

Snare	16
Cymbals	12
Bass	10
Tenor	8
Sextets	4

AUXILIARY35

Dancers	19
Flags	13
Batons	3

DRUM MAJORS5

SUPPORT37

Managers	20
Media Team	13
Production Team	4

Know your numbers. Know your people.

Where We're Headed

Our growth target for next season—section by section.

241 → **340**
PROJECTED · 2027–2028

WINDS	114 → 166	DRUMLINE	50 → 64 CAP 64	AUXILIARY	35 → 62	SUPPORT	37 → 42
Trumpet	26 → 39	Snare	16 → 21	Dancers	19 → 24	Managers	20 → 20
Sousaphone GOAL	18 → 28	Cymbals	12 → 18	Flags GOAL	13 → 32	Media Team	13 → 19
Trombone	14 → 19	Bass	10 → 13	Batons GOAL	3 → 6	Production Team	4 → 3
Alto Sax	13 → 23	Tenor	8 → 9				
Mellophone	11 → 16	Sextets	4 → 3	DRUM MAJORS GOAL	5 → 6		
Clarinet	11 → 6						
Euphonium	6 → 11						
Piccolo	6 → 12						
Tenor Sax	5 → 8						
Baritone	4 → 4						

How we get there: keep 95% of returning members, recruit a class 50% larger than this year's, and hold section caps (Percussion 64 · Dancers 24 · Managers 20). **Hard goals** set for Flags, Sousaphones, Batons, and Drum Majors. Graduating seniors are already removed from the returning count.

The Road to Hampton

What I ask of you, I have lived — at every stop along the way.

2003 – 2008 · STAFF

Brooklyn Steppers

Jackie Robinson Steppers

- ◆ **2004 National High School High Stepping Champions**—the first field show I ever designed.
- ◆ 2005 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

2009 – 2017 · STAFF

NC A&T Blue & Gold Marching Machine

Greensboro, NC

- ◆ **Honda Battle of the Bands**—2009, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017.
- ◆ 2012 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

2017 – PRESENT · DIRECTOR

The Hampton University Marching Force

Director of University Bands

- ◆ A Hampton full circle—leading the band I marched in.
- ◆ Our record is already on the books—and you are writing the next chapter.

Service: U.S. Army Reserve noncommissioned officer, with deployments to **Iraq (2009)**, **Afghanistan (2011)**, and **Djibouti (2023)**. **National stage:** marched the 2023 Macy's Parade and the 2026 Tournament of Roses Parade with Saluting America's Band Directors.

The Marching Force Record

Since 2017, under Dr. Jones — the national stages you now carry forward.

2018 Honda Battle of the Bands, Atlanta

2020 **Rome New Year's Day Parade** · Honda Battle of the Bands, Atlanta

2025 Honda Battle of the Bands, Los Angeles · a third appearance

2019 **Tournament of Roses Parade** · Drumline on Colorado Boulevard

2021 **Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade** · New York

2026 Featured in *Wanda Sykes: Legacy* · a record 241 members

From **80 members in 2017** to a **record 241 in 2026**—three national parades, three Honda Battle of the Bands appearances, and a New Year's Day performance in Rome. You inherit this standard.

A Scholar of His Own Field

Why our vision centers on servant-leadership and anti-hazing.

11 Earned college degrees, associate through doctorate	10 Institutions across six states	Ph.D. Leadership Studies · NC A&T (2014)	2026 Newest degrees: Music Education (Liberty) and Professional Writing (NYU)
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The through-line: my doctoral dissertation, my Gonzaga thesis, and my 2026 publication all study **servant-leadership and preventing hazing in HBCU marching bands**—the very program you now help lead. This is not theory to me. It is the standard we will live.

A Few Fun Facts

The person behind the podium.



Qole — short for “Qole Train,” after John Coltrane.



Emma and Qole — my two. Qole rides with me now.



I skate — in-line, roller, and ice.

THE 5K STREAK

Ran a 5K **every day for five months straight** in 2020 to help fund the band's Macy's Parade trip.

BEFORE THE BATON

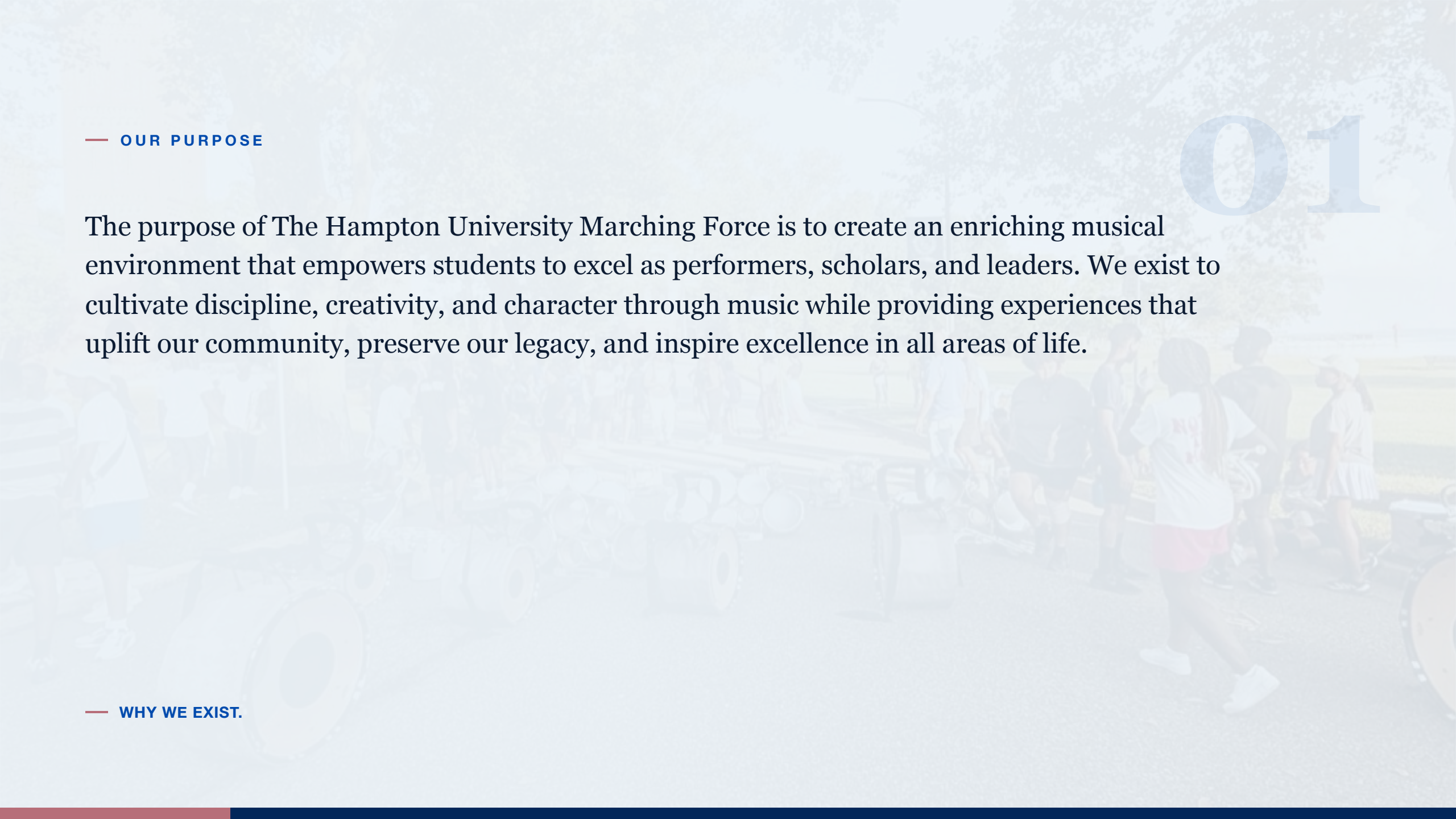
Played **baseball, football, wrestling, and track** before I found the band.

FAVORITES

Food: **steak**. Color: **black**. Instruments: the **flugelhorn** and the **Rhodes piano**.

ONE LAST THING

*I fear only one thing in this world—and it is **not** what you think it is.*



— OUR PURPOSE

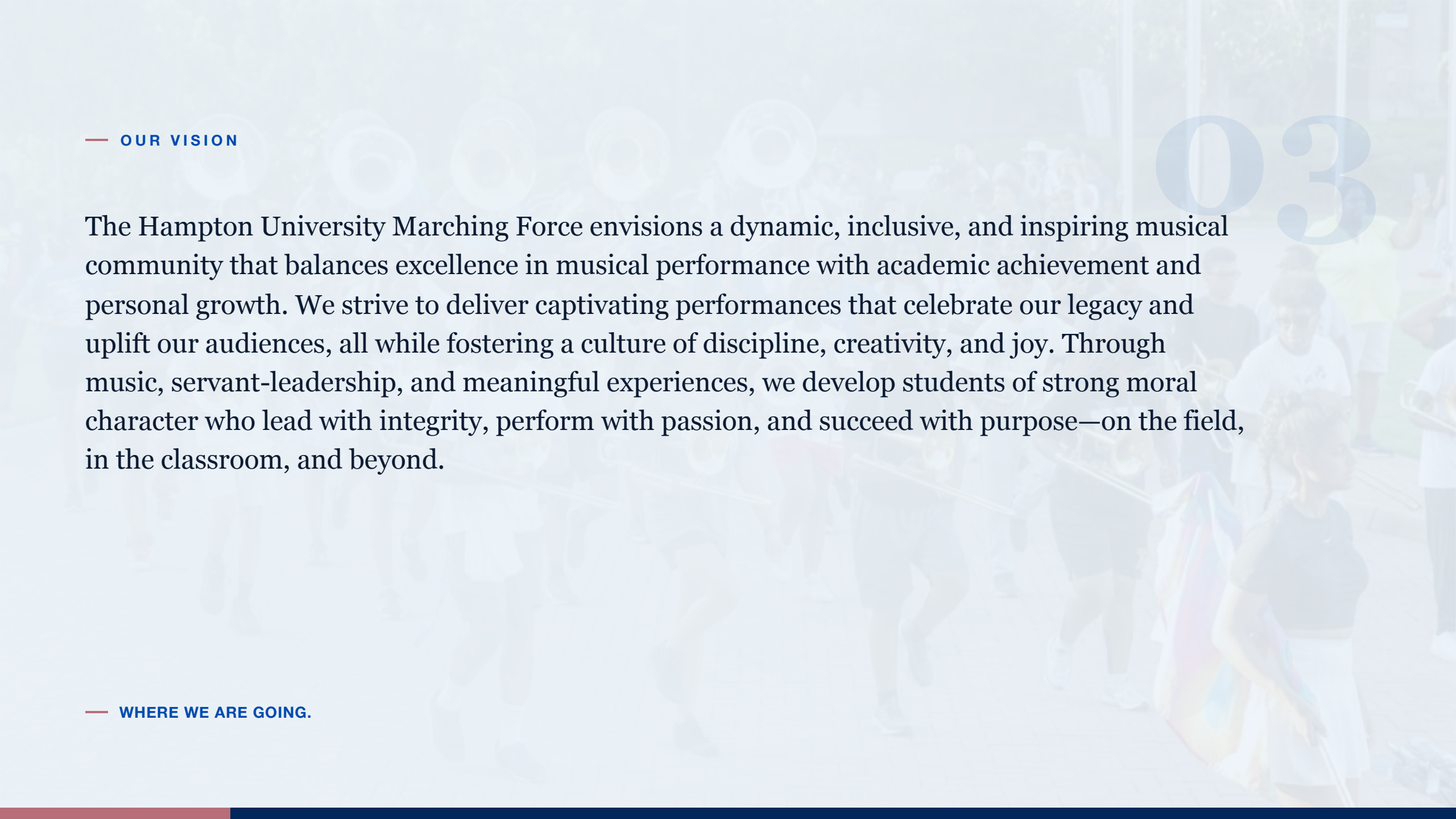
The purpose of The Hampton University Marching Force is to create an enriching musical environment that empowers students to excel as performers, scholars, and leaders. We exist to cultivate discipline, creativity, and character through music while providing experiences that uplift our community, preserve our legacy, and inspire excellence in all areas of life.

— WHY WE EXIST.

— OUR MISSION

The mission of The Hampton University Marching Force is to deliver world-class performances that reflect the heritage and pride of Hampton University, foster academic and personal growth among our members, and develop students into leaders of integrity and high moral character. Through rigorous musicianship, servant-leadership, and a commitment to excellence, we prepare our students to succeed on the field, in the classroom, and in their future endeavors.

— WHAT WE DO.

The background of the slide features a faded, light blue image of a marching band in motion. A large, semi-transparent blue number '03' is positioned in the upper right corner. The text is overlaid on this background.

— OUR VISION

The Hampton University Marching Force envisions a dynamic, inclusive, and inspiring musical community that balances excellence in musical performance with academic achievement and personal growth. We strive to deliver captivating performances that celebrate our legacy and uplift our audiences, all while fostering a culture of discipline, creativity, and joy. Through music, servant-leadership, and meaningful experiences, we develop students of strong moral character who lead with integrity, perform with passion, and succeed with purpose—on the field, in the classroom, and beyond.

— WHERE WE ARE GOING.

OUR WATCHWORD · 2026-2027

OPTIMIZE

The way we do business this year.

What OPTIMIZE Means

Run the program like a tighter ship—top to bottom.

01 Processes

Tighten how we operate. Clear steps, clear standards, repeatable results—so nothing runs on guesswork.

03 Efficiency

Respect time and effort. Waste nothing—not a rep, a minute, or a member's talent.

02 Accountability

Own your role. Do what you say, when you say, to standard—and answer for your section.

04 A Tighter Ship

Discipline and precision in every space: the field, the band room, the dorms, and online.

“The Standard is The Standard.”

From the Handbook — The Standard

The Hampton University Code of Conduct we all model.

- ◆ **Respect yourself**—carry maturity, self-respect, and pride in the legacy.
 - ◆ **Respect the dignity, feelings, worth, and values of others.**
 - ◆ **Foster a personal, professional work ethic**—strive for efficiency and a spirit to serve.
 - ◆ **Foster an open, fair, and caring environment** where ideas are shared and everyone is treated fairly.
 - ◆ **Respect the rights and property of others**—no member shall lie, cheat, or steal.
-

Servant-leadership: the leader serves first; authority is earned through care, not title.

From the Handbook — Our Culture

How we treat each other is the program.

- ◆ **Anti-hazing:** belonging without cruelty. We build bonds on **respect, not fear.**
- ◆ **The battle-buddy system:** we monitor, help, and account for one another—no one moves alone.
- ◆ **Academics = eligibility:** the GPA is a condition to lead. We protect study time.
- ◆ **Chain of command:** know it, use it, and model it—on the field and on social media.

The 2026 Season

Where the standard shows up—every Saturday.

Aug 19 **Opening Ceremony** · HU Convocation Center **KICKOFF**

Aug 29 **vs. Virginia University of Lynchburg** **HOME OPENER**

Sep 12 vs. Bryant · Armstrong Stadium

Sep 26 vs. Campbell · Armstrong Stadium

Oct 17 **Battle of the Bands** vs. Norfolk State **BATTLE**

Oct 24 **Homecoming** vs. Monmouth **HOMECOMING**

Nov 7 at Elon, NC

Nov 21 at Stony Brook, NY

Aug 27 Welcome Kick Back · Downtown Hampton

Sep 5 at Maryland · College Park **TENTATIVE**

Sep 19 **at Norfolk State** **RIVALRY**

Oct 3 **at Howard** · Audi Field, DC **MARQUEE**

Oct 17 at Sacred Heart · Fairfield, CT

Oct 31 at Towson, MD

Nov 14 vs. NC A&T · Armstrong Stadium

Rivalry Saturday at Norfolk State (Sep 19) and the **Battle of the Bands vs. Norfolk State (Oct 17)**. Marquee stops at **Howard** and **Homecoming vs. Monmouth**; Maryland is a tentative Power-Five money game.

The Weekend Ahead — Day 1

Saturday, August 1 · "The Standard and The Why"

Welcome and Vision (you are here)

Know Yourself First · self-awareness

Emotional Intelligence

Servant-Leadership

Command Respect · earned, not demanded

Bonds, Not Fear

Why Hazing Happens · anti-hazing

"First In, Last Out"

Line Leader Tier + unit role breakouts

SOP and MSA Standard

The Hampton Sound · Instrumentalists

Day 1 Close

20-minute sessions. We end early so student leaders can program bonding time with their sections.

The Weekend Ahead — Day 2

Sunday, August 2 · "Applied Leadership and Camp Readiness"

Teach How to Teach

Drum Majors

Interpreting the Music · Auxiliary

Leading Under Pressure

Know Your People · read the room

Conflict Resolution

Difficult Conversations

Supporting the Auxiliary · Instrumentalists

Twirler Recruitment

Communication and Ambassadors

Closing Charge

30-minute sessions, wrapping by 6:00 PM—then dinner is on me. Bring your best; we finish the weekend ready for the members.

YOUR CHARGE

Set the Standard. Lead the Week.

Optimize your section—your processes, your accountability, your efficiency. Live the mission, model the standard, and give the membership a team worth following.

Serve First. Lead Always. — **Drive the Legacy.**

The Hampton University Marching Force
HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT