



PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026 · LEADERSHIP SEMINARS · DAY 1

Day 1 Close

"First In" — The First Half of the Creed

Dr. Thomas L. Jones, Jr. and the Captains

Director of University Bands · Day 1 Close, Saturday, August 1, 2026

The Hampton University Marching Force

HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT

Icebreaker

His edge was never talent—it was mindset, chosen every single day. Being First In is that same decision, made before anyone else shows up.



Kobe Bryant — “Mindset”

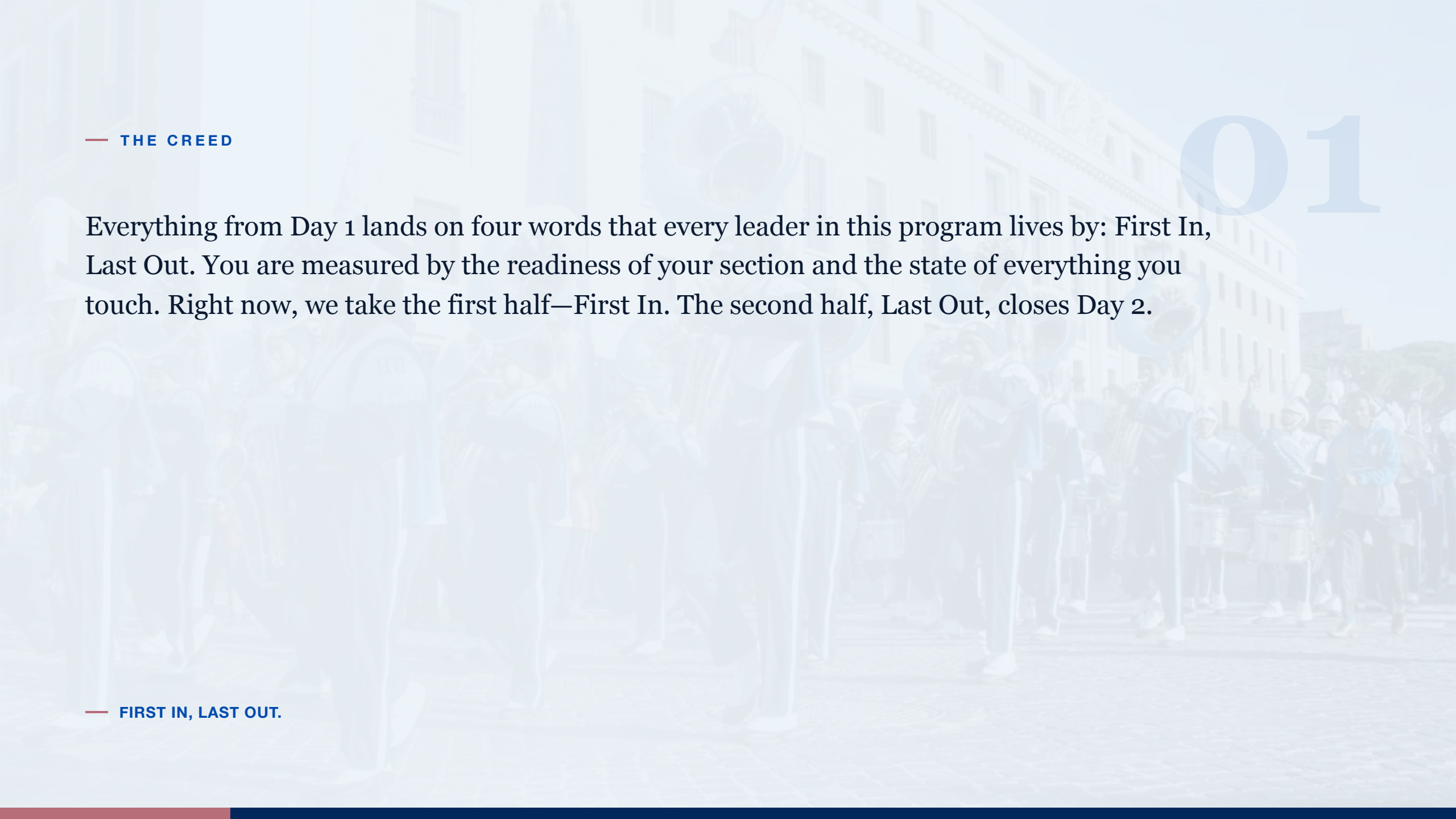
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Day 1 in Review

Everything we covered points at one standard.

- ◆ **Who we are.** Welcome and Vision named our purpose, mission, and this year's watchword—OPTIMIZE.
- ◆ **Know yourself.** Know Yourself First and Emotional Intelligence taught you to lead the person in the mirror before you lead anyone else.
- ◆ **How we lead.** Servant-Leadership, Command Respect, and Bonds Not Fear set the model: serve first, earn respect, build trust.
- ◆ **The line we hold.** Why Hazing Happens drew the bright lines we will not cross.
- ◆ **The craft.** The Line Leader, SOP and the MSA, and The Hampton Sound turned the standard into the daily work of the section.



— THE CREED

01

Everything from Day 1 lands on four words that every leader in this program lives by: First In, Last Out. You are measured by the readiness of your section and the state of everything you touch. Right now, we take the first half—First In. The second half, Last Out, closes Day 2.

— FIRST IN, LAST OUT.

What "First In" Means

A habit of readiness, not a single act.

- ◆ **First to arrive.** You are in the room before your section—never rushing in alongside them.
- ◆ **First prepared.** Your part is learned, your horn is ready, and you have already gotten your own reps in.
- ◆ **First to set the tone.** The energy and the standard of the rehearsal are set before anyone else walks in—by you.
- ◆ **First to serve.** You are first in to get others ready, not first in line for the credit.

First In Has a Clock

Readiness is not a feeling—it is a schedule.

30 minutes early — leaders warm up and practice on their own	15 minutes early — your section arrives and warms up, led by you	0:00 the downbeat — everyone is ready to play the first note
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“If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready.” The director's downbeat is the start of the work, not the warm-up—by the time it comes, being First In means you are already there.

You Set the Tone

Your section takes its cue from you—before a note is played.

- ◆ The section reads you the moment you walk in. If you are ready and locked in, they lock in. If you are late and scrambling, so are they.
- ◆ **Readiness is the standard you model, not the one you announce.** They meet the bar you actually set, never the one you only talk about.
- ◆ Being First In is how you lead without saying a word—the room is already at the standard when the director arrives.
- ◆ Set the tone on purpose. It is the most important thing you do all day, and it happens before rehearsal even starts.

First In to Serve

"First In" is a servant's habit, not a spotlight.

- ◆ You get there first to **make others ready**—to set up, to teach the fix, to warm the section—not to be seen doing it.
- ◆ **Model the behavior you demand.** Never ask your section to do what you have not already done yourself.
- ◆ The leader who is First In has no standing to skip the reps. You hold the bar by clearing it first.
- ◆ This is Servant-Leadership on the clock: your preparation is in service of theirs.

Ties directly to the Servant-Leadership and Command Respect seminars from Day 1.

Why Readiness Is the Standard

Recap the standard—and the reason behind it.

- ◆ **Excellence is a habit, not an event.** You do not rise to the occasion; you fall to the level of your preparation.
- ◆ **The members mirror the leaders.** A section is only ever as ready as the person leading it.
- ◆ **Time is respect.** Being First In respects everyone's time—rehearsal starts on the downbeat because the work started before it.
- ◆ This is THE Standard of Excellence in practice: we are ready before we are asked to be.

Your Commitments Into Day 2

Name the standard you will hold—starting with the very next rehearsal.

1 Be First In

Arrive 30 minutes early—prepared and warmed up—before your section does.

3 Set the Tone

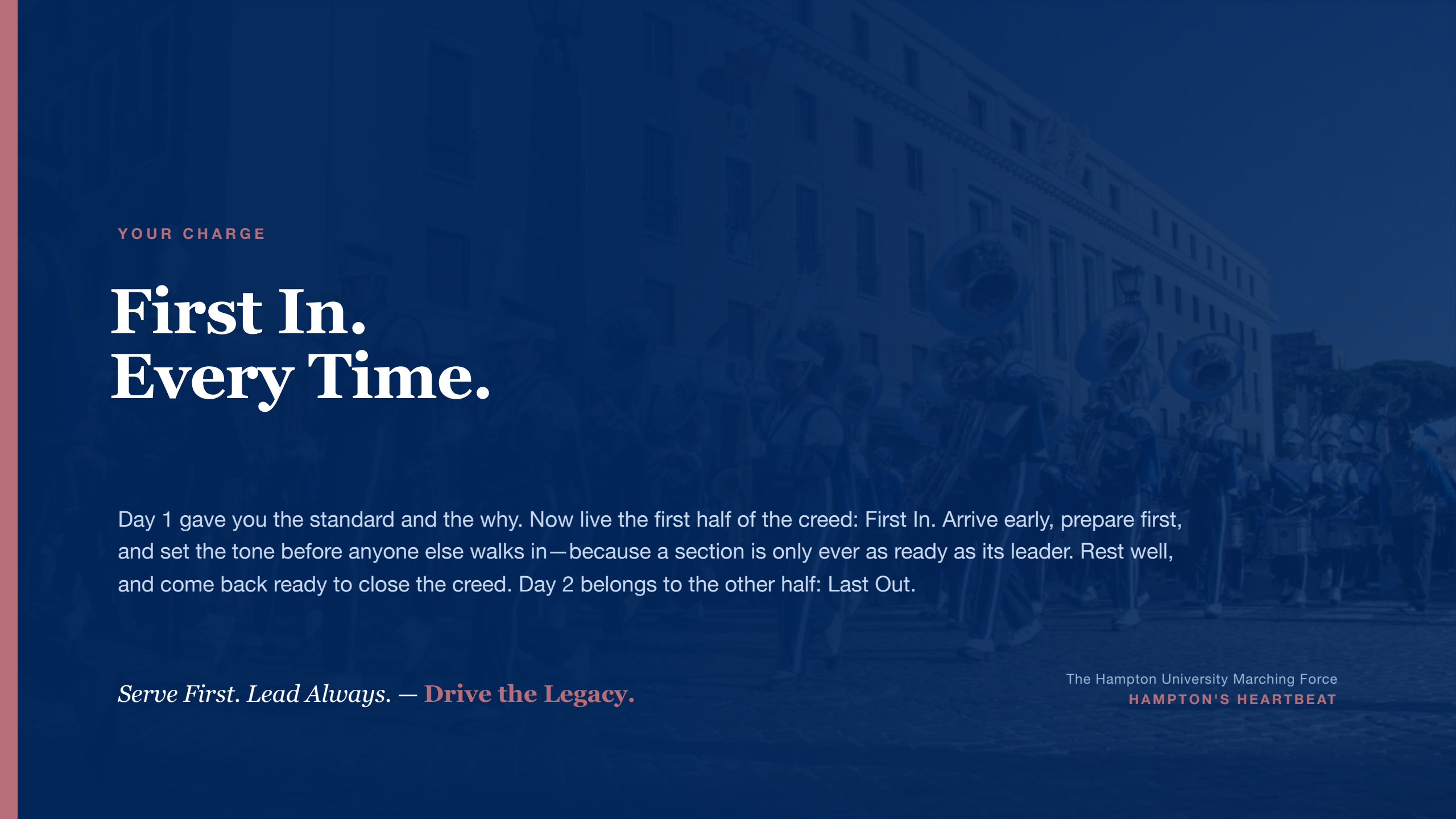
Walk in locked in. Let the room take its standard from you.

2 Ready the Section

Get your people in 15 minutes early and warmed up, ready by the downbeat.

4 Model It

Do the reps first. Never demand what you have not already done.

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of the Hampton University Marching Force. The band members are wearing uniforms and carrying large brass instruments, likely tubas or euphoniums, and are marching in front of a large, multi-story building with many windows. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark blue overlay.

YOUR CHARGE

First In. Every Time.

Day 1 gave you the standard and the why. Now live the first half of the creed: First In. Arrive early, prepare first, and set the tone before anyone else walks in—because a section is only ever as ready as its leader. Rest well, and come back ready to close the creed. Day 2 belongs to the other half: Last Out.

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

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