



The  
Marching  
**SOUTHERNERS**  
**HANDBOOK**

## Overview

### ***The Marching Southerners***

For **over 65** years, the **Sudler Trophy** award-winning “***The Marching Southerners***” has been known as a premier university level marching band organization, and for good reason. This impressive musical-marching extravaganza has developed a national reputation for excellence through its dynamic show presentations and feature performances throughout the nation and the world. Founded in 1956 by Dr. John T. Finley, *The Marching Southerners* feature the *Marching Ballerinas*, the *Southerners Colorguard*, and numerous wind and percussion instrumentalists. Their loyal alumni provide a witness that *The Marching Southerners* represent one of the truly great traditions of university bands.

### ***Our Mission Statement***

Changing lives one show at a time by inspiring excellence and creating an inclusive, innovative learning environment that values dedication while extending kindness to all.

## ***The Marching Ballerinas***

*The Marching Ballerinas* have been a tradition at Jacksonville State University since 1956. As a precision kick-line, they are well known for their unity and poise in the performance of both dance and drill. Alumni *Ballerinas* repeatedly exclaim how being a *Ballerina* was one of the most prestigious honors they received while at JSU. Being a *Ballerina* is demanding but full of rewards. Dedication, persistence, and perfection are coveted trademarks of this outstanding organization. These talented young women have dance, cheerleading, majorette or other experience that lends itself to the skills required for membership. A head *Ballerina* and three group leaders lead the *Ballerinas*. Qualified performers are encouraged to try out for the ranks of this outstanding organization.

Information on how to enroll for tryouts and training sessions for *The Marching Ballerinas* may be obtained by contacting the JSU Band Office or online at [www.marchingballerinas.org](http://www.marchingballerinas.org).

## ***The Southerners Colorguard***

*The Southerners Colorguard* includes individuals that usually have previous colorguard experience. However, students with dance, baton, cheerleading or other similar experience usually have the basic skills to be successful members of the *Colorguard*. During the spring term, *The Marching Southerners Colorguard* staff offers training classes for both experienced and inexperienced students.

Information on how to enroll for tryouts and training sessions for The Southerners Colorguard may be obtained by contacting the JSU Band Office or online at [www.marchingsoutherners.org](http://www.marchingsoutherners.org).

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## **Code of Student Conduct**

As representatives of JSU and The Marching Southerners, members are expected to uphold the JSU Code of Student Conduct while on and off campus. Failure to abide by the JSU Code of Student Conduct may jeopardize your ability to continue to function as a member of the Marching Southerners. Participants of The Marching Southerners are expected to hold themselves to the highest standard as representatives of JSU.

Per the University's Student's Reporting Policy, students are expected to disclose any arrest, conviction, or the preferring of charges to the Director of Community Standards and Student Ethics. Members of The Marching Southerners are expected to notify professional staff of any pending disciplinary or criminal issue. The JSU Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://www.jsu.edu/community-standards/code-of-student-conduct.html>.

## **Hazing Policy**

The Marching Southerners **promotes a standard of “no hazing.”** Hazing is not acceptable conduct for any member of the Marching Southerners. You should refuse to participate in or condone any hazing activity. Refusal to participate will not impact your participation in the Marching Southerners. If you experience hazing of any form, you should *immediately report it directly* to the Band Directors or the administration of Jacksonville State University. Students acting in good faith who report a violation may qualify for amnesty, as articulated below.

The term “hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with other persons,

against any individual or group of individuals, regardless of affiliation, whether or not committed on organizational property or JSU property, for the purpose of recruiting, joining, initiating, admitting, affiliating, or for the purpose of retaining membership in an organization that causes an individual or group of individuals to do any of the following regardless of a person's willingness to participate:

- a. Be coerced to violate federal, state, provincial, local law or JSU policy;
- b. Be coerced to consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug, or other substance in any noncustomary manner which subjects the individual or group of individuals to a substantial risk of emotional or physical harm which includes but is not limited to sickness, vomiting, intoxication, or unconsciousness;
- c. Endure brutality of a physical nature, including but not limited to whipping, beating, paddling, branding, dangerous physical activity, or exposure to elements or endure threats of such conduct that results in mental or physical harm;
- d. Endure brutality of mental nature, including but not limited to activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of an individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment or endure threats of such conduct that results in mental or physical harm;
- e. Endure any other activity which adversely affects the health and safety of an individual, including but not limited to the disruption of academic performance or class attendance, required designated driving programs, line ups, calisthenics, or personal, physical, or financial servitude.

## **Sex-Based Harassment and Misconduct Policy**

Jacksonville State University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities that it operates. JSU is required, by Title IX

of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Department of Education regulations to implement Title IX, not to discriminate in such a manner. This requirement to not discriminate in educational programs and activities extends to employment by the university and to admission thereto. This may include sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and other conduct that is addressed in our "[Sex-Based Harassment and Misconduct Policy](#)." Anyone with knowledge of this type of conduct is asked to immediately report such incidents to the University Police Department at (256) 782-5050 or the Title IX Coordinator at (256) 782-5769. If an individual wishes to keep the information confidential, the individual should speak with a counselor at the Counseling Services office at (256) 782-5475 or a medical provider at JSU's Health Center (256) 782-5310. For more information about Title IX or to report a concern, please visit the JSU Title IX webpage at [www.jsu.edu/titleix](http://www.jsu.edu/titleix).

## **Amnesty Policies**

**Medical Amnesty.** A bystander or a reporting individual acting in good faith that seeks immediate and appropriate medical assistance for a person in need related to the use or consumption of alcohol, drugs, or to another medical emergency, may not be subject to the Code of Student Conduct for violations of alcohol and/or drug use policies occurring at or near the time of the incident in question.

### ***Steps to Medical Amnesty.***

- Call 911, so appropriate emergency personnel (police, fire, and ambulance) can respond.
- Remain with the individual needing treatment and cooperate with emergency officials, as long as it is safe to do so.

- Notify and meet with appropriate University officials after the incident and cooperate with any University investigation that may ensue.

**Good Samaritan Amnesty.** A bystander or a reporting individual acting in good faith that discloses any incident of violence, including hazing, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault, to university officials or law enforcement may not be subject to the Code of Student Conduct for violations of alcohol and/or drug use policies occurring at or near the time of the incident in question.

To qualify for this amnesty, students must notify and meet with appropriate University officials after the incident and cooperate with any University investigation that may ensue.

These amnesty policies do not protect repeated, flagrant, or serious violations of the Code of Student Conduct or other university policies (including physical or sexual assault, violence, hazing, harassment, theft, or vandalism or instances where multiple individuals need medical attention), nor does it preclude or prevent action by police or other legal authorities.

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# The Marching Southerners

Great marching bands are built on a foundation of traditions. Traditions become a reality through student pride and involvement. It is the responsibility of every member of The Marching Southerners to honor, uphold, and build upon the traditions of this outstanding organization. The regulations stated in this guidebook will better assist this organization to function as a cohesive unit and uphold the proud traditions of the Jacksonville State University bands.

The leadership model of The Marching Southerners is not just their trademark but also their formula for excellence. Leadership is a quality that starts with a positive team-oriented attitude, a high level of motivation, and sincere respect for others. Great band leaders are often not always the most vocal but are usually those who combine their musical abilities with sensibility and a number of other tangible qualities.

All students in the band are expected to assume a responsible leadership role. **The strongest leaders lead by example (i.e., Take care of themselves and their own responsibilities before assisting others).** While it is not necessary for someone to be assigned a position or rank to be an effective leader, *The Marching Southerners* do follow a strict chain of command, which is as follows:

## ***Directors/Graduate Teaching Assistants/Instructional Staff***

The band directors oversee all students, assistants, instructors, and coordinators. Graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and coordinators report directly to the director(s) of bands and are given specifically defined assignments related to the development and implementation of the marching program.

## ***Administrative Assistant of the University Bands***

Directly reports to the director(s) of bands and has specific assignments related to the administration and management of the total band program.

## ***Drum Majors***

Reports to the band directors, staff, graduate teaching assistants and administrative assistant. They are directly responsible for leading the band in both rehearsal and performance as outlined by the directors. The drum major(s) is the ultimate student leader.

## ***Section Leaders***

Headed by the drum major(s), section leaders will rehearse and lead their sections as outlined by the Directors and the instructional staff.

## ***Student Management Staff***

Includes Librarians, Equipment Managers, Instrument Managers and Uniform Managers that are directly responsible to the Director(s) of bands and coordinated by the band's administrative assistant. Problems with music equipment and uniforms should be directed to the person in charge of each area. All other needs should first be directed to the band's administrative assistant or Graduate teaching assistants.

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## **Auditions**

Auditions for *The Marching Southerners* are held in three parts. The audition will consist of marching and music in preparation for the fall performances, in addition to the attitude of the member. Music auditions will be sent in through a video submission. The selected music will be provided by the section leaders and posted on the Marching Southerners website.

The marching portion of the audition will take place during the first couple of rehearsal blocks during band camp. During this time, staff and section leaders will assess the marching ability of all members. This will be based on what is taught during the rehearsal blocks.

The last section of the audition will be based upon your attitude. The Southerners have a proud tradition of family, and that cannot be achieved without a great mindset and attitude from all of the members.

*The Marching Southerners* membership is representative of all departments, colleagues, and schools encompassed by the University, and all class levels from freshmen through graduates. The band consists of wind and percussion instrumentalists, colorguard, ballerinas, and drum majors.

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### ***Woodwind and Brass Instrumentalists***

Woodwind and Brass instrumentalists should be prepared to demonstrate skills of style, articulation, tone, technique, and intonation. Selections from the show will be used as the audition music as well as anything else deemed necessary by the section leaders.

If you are selected to be a member of your respective section for the upcoming Fall semester, you must register for the one (1) credit hour *Marching Southerners* course (MU 192 or MU 392). MU 192 is for Freshmen and Sophomores. MU 392 is for Juniors and Seniors.

## ***Percussionists***

Percussionists should be prepared to audition on their instrument(s) of specialty whether it is on the battery or the front ensemble section. Percussion auditions will be held in May. Upon request, warm-up and technique building exercises will be sent in advance. Auditions will test skills such as scales and rudiments as well as reading. Placement will be based on the student's ability to demonstrate the required skills and needs of the section. The prospective members **may** be video recorded during this portion of the audition. To locate more information about percussion auditions, click here:

<https://www.marchingsoutherners.org/jsu-drumline-auditions/>.

If you are selected to be a member of the battery or front ensemble sections for the upcoming Fall semester, you must register for the one (1) credit hour *Marching Southerners* course (MU 192 or MU 392). MU 192 is for Freshmen and Sophomores. MU 392 is for Juniors and Seniors.

## ***The Marching Ballerinas***

The audition season begins with an interest meeting in spring followed by a two-weekend audition process. Attendance of the interest meeting is not mandatory; however, if you cannot attend, contact us for the audition packet and detailed audition information. During the clinic weekend in the spring, the Marching Ballerinas' dance styles are taught and applied to audition routines. At clinics, potential Marching Ballerinas will learn two audition routines: a traditional or kickline style that dates back over 50 years and is modeled after the Radio

City Rockettes and a “modern” dance ranging in styles including jazz, character, and lyrical depending on the year and the season's show theme. At the end of the second clinic day, candidates will participate in first cut auditions and approximately 50 candidates are invited to final auditions the following weekend. With the direction of a panel of highly qualified judges, the Marching Ballerinas will be chosen and posted after final auditions in the "boot" for all to see!

If you are selected to be a Marching Ballerina for the upcoming Fall semester, you must register for the one (1) credit hour *Marching Ballerinas/Colorguard* course (MU 198 or MU 398). MU 198 is for Freshmen and Sophomores. MU 398 is for Juniors and Seniors.

### ***Colorguard***

Colorguard auditions are held during the month of May. Students will be required to demonstrate proficiency on flag and limited movement fundamentals. Students will also be required to perform a passage published two months before the audition date. These links will be sent via E-Mail. Students will receive this information as long as they register for the Marching Southerners Colorguard audition. Students wishing to take part in the Spring training sessions must call the band office prior to the Spring semester. The remaining positions are open to qualified individuals who audition at band camp.

Information on how to enroll for tryouts and training sessions for The Southerners Colorguard may be obtained by contacting the JSU Band Office or online at [www.marchingsoutherners.org](http://www.marchingsoutherners.org).

If you are selected to be a member of the Colorguard for the upcoming Fall semester, you must register for the one (1) credit hour *Marching Ballerinas/Colorguard* course (MU 198 or MU 398). MU 198 is for Freshmen and Sophomores. MU 398 is for Juniors and Seniors.

## Marching Audition

The criteria for placement in the marching block will be determined by the marching audition. The Southerners marching technique will be thoroughly explained, and many repetitions will be executed as a group. The audition will be performed in a group before the section leaders and directors.

## Drum Major Auditions

A candidate for Drum Major must march as a playing or auxiliary member of the block for at least one (1) season to be eligible to audition for Drum Major. Auditions are held annually.

***Preliminary Drum Major Auditions*** are held in November and are open to all interested band members. The Leadership Staff, through the preliminary audition process, will select qualified candidates to participate in the final audition. Candidates will be adjudicated on the following items: leadership potential, musicianship, and conducting skills.

***Final Drum Major Auditions*** are held after the preliminary auditions. The finalists will perform the skills stated in the preliminary auditions for the entire band with the addition of a brief interview. The drum major candidate will perform a movement from that year's show, plus either Salvation is Created, or Stars Fell. An interview question may be asked by one of the directors, and the candidate will answer in front of the whole band. A vote by the band and the staff will determine the drum majors.

## Alternates

As deemed necessary, students that do not meet the requirements for full admission into the marching block will be assigned to the alternate positions. This entitles the student to continue working on the skills to gain full admission. Alternates are included in performance in the stands during football games as well as in parades (reliant upon uniform availability) until full admission is obtained. Alternates are ranked from the playing and marching auditions and are placed in the block by this ranking as appropriate positions open. Alternates are still required to attend all rehearsals and performances because they are valued members of The Marching Southerners.

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## Band Camp

Any person interested in becoming a member of The Marching Southerners must attend Band Camp. The camp is held one to two weeks prior to the beginning of classes. For those of you staying in a dorm as your permanent housing for the fall semester, you will move directly to your permanent dorm when you check in at camp. JSU will **NOT** be providing temporary housing for band camp during Fall 2023. In order to have on-campus housing for band camp, you will need to be registered for Fall 2023 permanent housing. Students are responsible for their own meals. Band camp information can be found on the band's website at:

<https://www.marchingsoutherners.org/band-camp/>

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After arrival on campus, all instrumentalists will have a marching audition (see "auditions" above) to help set the marching block and to determine part placement.

Indoor rehearsals and outdoor marching blocks will occupy the morning, afternoon, and evening of each camp day prior to the first day of classes. **All part and drill assignments will be posted by the second full day of band camp.**

**EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO BE AT ALL BAND CAMP REHEARSALS**

*You must schedule to be off work well in advance. Having work is not an excuse, as the schedule is posted well in advance.*

*If you plan to march with a **drum corps** in the summer, you **must** indicate that on the band camp registration. You are expected to report to band camp the day following drum corps finals.*

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## Instrument and Equipment Check-out Procedure

The University provides the following instruments for marching band: tubas (20-J's), percussion equipment, mellophones, and marching baritones/euphoniums. Mouthpieces will also be issued for Mellophones, Baritones, and 20J's. All members in those sections will play on the designated mouthpieces. Only the band administrative assistant or graduate teaching assistants can issue equipment. Section leaders assist in the initial check-out process at band camp registration; however, instruments may be checked out during brass/woodwind day if needed. All equipment must be returned at the end of the season.

Any equipment not returned to the university band department at the close of the season will be charged to that student's university account. The Marching Southerners and Jacksonville State University will not be held responsible for any damage to personal instruments. Members may check out instruments to practice in the off-season. However, no instruments may be checked out without the knowledge of the Graduate Teaching Assistants.

**NO INSTRUMENTS MAY BE SWAPPED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTORS OR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS.**

All students using a university owned instrument are responsible for any major or minor damage and theft when the instrument is under their care. When the instrument is not in use it must be properly stored and secured. It is recommended that the student contact the underwriter of their (or their parents') homeowner's insurance policy to secure coverage for the instrument for the period of usage. All university instruments must be returned in good working order with necessary repairs, cleaning and greasing done prior to the check-in of the instrument. All students should come to band camp with their instruments in

good working order. The band has a remarkably busy schedule, and the university cannot provide you with a horn while yours is being repaired. Fortunately, the band is well serviced by our local music merchant's technicians (i.e., *Gadsden Music Company*). Please take advantage of their services and patronize these fine members of our music community.

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## Policies

*\*All policies, rules and regulations apply to **ALL** members of the Marching Southerners! They also apply to **ALL** performances (parades, pep rallies, games, exhibitions).\**

### Memorization and Pass-off Policy

All music should be memorized during camp with the exception of new music that arrives during the regular season. This will be checked by a “pass-off” system. **Section members will play for the section leaders.** This system is designed to encourage superior performance standards for each member of the band. Failure to memorize music or perform up to standard will jeopardize the student’s position in the marching block.

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### Uniform Policy

Uniforms should be neat and wrinkle free for all performances. Winds and percussion must have the specified shoe type (Dinkles: black patent leather shoe) and calf-length black socks at all performances. Each member is expected to wear their current member shirt at all performances. When not wearing the jacket, bibbers must be worn properly (straps over the shoulder) with shoes.

- **Hats** of any type, other than those previously approved, are not permitted in the stands. Black JSU hats are permitted in the stands at football games.
- **Sunglasses** are not permitted during pre-game, halftime, postgame, or exhibition performances. Sunglasses **are** permitted in the stands at football games and are strongly encouraged for all rehearsals.

The following grooming guidelines have been established to ensure a uniform and clean-cut appearance of *The Marching Southerners*:

- **Hair** – Excessively long hair, both male and female, must be put in a ponytail and worn inside the shako. It is preferred to have hair cut to a manageable length. **If anyone in a section that has exposed hair and does not wear a shako chooses to dye their hair, the dyed hair must be a natural hair color.**
- **Jewelry** - No jewelry is to be worn while in uniform. Earrings, with the exception of clear or black studs, will not be worn while in uniform. No **tongue rings** or **facial piercings** are allowed during performances. If you have large ear piercings, they must be removed, and you may use clear spacers. Wedding bands and engagement rings are permitted and can be worn under the gloves; however, any worn while in uniform will not be the responsibility of the University Bands, or JSU if it is lost or if any damage occurs. Should a member be in violation of these jewelry guidelines, they will have to remove the, or be sent home.
- **Cosmetics** – With the exception of the Colorguard and the Ballerinas, the use of cosmetics is to be kept to an absolute minimum while in uniform.
- **Tattoos** - All exposed tattoos must be covered completely during all performances.

**ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING, VAPING, OR DRINKING ALCOHOL WILL BE TOLERATED WHILE IN PARTIAL OR FULL UNIFORM OR AT ANY BAND-RELATED FUNCTION.** A “band-related function” includes any rehearsal or event where *The Marching Southerners* are present. Anyone caught smoking, drinking, or vaping will automatically be dismissed from the program.

**ANY PERSON IN VIOLATION OF THESE GUIDELINES WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL FROM THE MARCHING SOUTHERNERS AS WELL AS LOSS OF ANY BAND SCHOLARSHIP AT THE DIRECTORS’ DISCRETION.**

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## **Rehearsal Policy**

**Rehearsal begins promptly at 4:15pm excluding Thursday when rehearsal begins at 6:30pm** (Miscellaneous Ensemble section rehearsals are arranged by section leaders. Attendance at these arranged sectional rehearsals is **mandatory** unless approved by the directors). Students are expected to display a **PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE** toward all rehearsals.

Due to the large number of members in *The Marching Southerners*, talking must be kept to an absolute minimum. When the band has stopped, immediately cease playing and/or marching, and listen to the instructions being given. When there are instructions being given from the top (the band tower), all talking stops, including talking amongst the staff and section leaders. This is the only way to efficiently use rehearsal time to meet our high-performance standards.

**ABSOLUTELY NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOL BEFORE/DURING PERFORMANCES OR BAND RELATED FUNCTIONS.** Anyone caught drinking before or during band related functions will automatically be dismissed from the program. It is university policy that no student can drink alcohol on a university sponsored trip/event.

**THE USE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AT ANY TIME.** Anyone caught under the influence of illegal substances during rehearsals, performances, or travel will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated. You represent our band at all times. Be ready to play in the stands at ALL times. Students must stand when they play. Music will not be used when performing; everything must be memorized. Only current members of the Marching Southerners are allowed in the stands during football games. Alumni or family are not permitted within the section.

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## Attendance Policy

All rehearsals and performances are required. Do not schedule any kind of appointments or classes during rehearsal time (this includes pre-recital hearings and make-up lessons). As stated before, you are expected to be at rehearsal on time. If you are late to rehearsal, you are to report to a graduate teaching assistant to correct the absence for the day. The full absence policy can be found here: <https://www.marchingsoutherners.org/absence-policy/>.

## Unexcused Absence Policy

After the **FIRST** unexcused absence from a rehearsal, the student's grade for the class is deducted by one letter grade.

After the **SECOND** unexcused absence from a rehearsal, the student's grade for the class is deducted by another letter grade. The student may also be subjected to alternate status at the discretion of the directors.

After the **THIRD** unexcused absence from a rehearsal, the student will fail the class and be dismissed from the program. This will also involve the loss of any JSU Band scholarship that the student may have.

If a student misses **ANY** performance without an absence request form being submitted AND approved by the directors, the student will fail the class and be dismissed from the program. This will also involve the loss of any JSU Band scholarship that the student may have.

## **Excused Absence Policy**

Students needing to excuse an absence from a rehearsal will have to fill out an absence request form. The form will need to be submitted by 12:00pm on the day of the rehearsal in which you wish to be excused. The directors will then review the form and either approve or deny your absence request form. If your absence request form is denied by a director, your absence will be considered unexcused for that day. Listed below are the different circumstances that may permit a student for an excused absence:

- **Illness** (a doctor's note must be uploaded on the absence request form)
- **JSU Sponsored Activity** (a sponsored activity form must be uploaded on the absence request form)
- **Wedding** (must be of an immediate family member, or wedding in which you are a bridesmaid or groomsman)
- **Funeral**
- **Car trouble** (must submit an absence request form AND let your section leader know as soon as you are aware of the issue)
- **Other** (this can be specified in the comment section of the absence request form and is subject to approval by the directors/staff)

**\*If it is discovered that a student has falsified information regarding their excused absence, it will result in immediate dismissal from the program and loss of any JSU Band scholarship. \***

## Tardy Policy

Two tardies is equivalent to one **UNEXCUSED** absence. If you will be tardy to rehearsal due to a class conflict, you must notify the directors at the beginning of the semester via email. If you are tardy to rehearsal, you must check in with a GTA upon arrival. Otherwise, this will result in an **UNEXCUSED** absence.

**\*Auxiliary units (Colorguard and Ballerinas) may follow different guidelines and policies regarding unexcused absences, excused absences, and tardies. These different guidelines and policies will be provided and explained by leadership staff.\***

**Note: Perfect** attendance is the **standard**. Anything less than this will be construed as a lack of interest on the part of the student and will result in a **lowered grade and/or reassignment out of the marching block**.

The student assumes responsibility for any unexcused absence. **DO NOT ASK TO BE EXCUSED** for **work, studying for exams, fraternity or sorority functions, make-up lessons, etc.** Our demands regarding your time will be announced in advance so that you can make arrangements to be at all functions. Members are **required** to participate in all performance events listed on the performance calendar at the beginning of the semester. All members are **expected** to arrange their schedules to meet these commitments. Extra events may include Pep Rallies, Parades, Special Exhibitions, or other community or University events.