

THE COLLEGIATE MARCHING BAND EXPERIENCE: AN  
ANALYSIS OF MARCHING BANDS IN THE MEDIA AND  
THE MEDIA'S PUBLIC PORTRAYAL OF MARCHING  
BANDS

by

HANNAH GIARDINA

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Nicole Dahmen

In recent years, due to several significant events, the coverage of collegiate marching bands in the news has become more relevant. Collegiate marching bands are generally characterized by their sound, performances, and appearances at collegiate level football games. Most bands perform a concert set before entering the stadium, a pregame performance, halftime show, and songs throughout the football game. Marching bands are also historic student groups at universities that carry many traditions in membership and performance.

Collegiate marching bands are groups that perform publicly on an almost weekly basis during the fall football season. As they are such a public entity, they also receive media attention. Newspapers at the collegiate level, local level, and national level run stories on these bands throughout the year, with most stories being published in the fall months. Why newspapers feature the band varies depending on the story, but the titles of those interviewed for the stories has little variation. These stories also show the positive and negative attributes and aspects of collegiate marching bands. This thesis seeks to analyze three specific collegiate marching band events to see how they

were framed by local and national newspapers. The events are the firing of The Ohio State Marching Band director, the performance of the South Carolina alma mater and fight song by the Louisiana State University Marching Band, and the Kansas State Marching Band's Jayhawk field formation incident.

In examining the three events, it was found that the framing of collegiate marching bands primarily featured the collegiate marching band director and a university administrator or representative. These articles however, rarely include the voice of the marching band member. It was found that local news articles frame the events with more detail and community connections, while the national articles focus on the facts and released statements. The language used amongst the articles was similar in nature.

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## **Introduction**

It is a crisp autumnal afternoon and excitement begins to rush through your body as you hear the tap of the drum and the downbeat to your university's fight song. It's game day and you are ready to cheer your school to victory. Now imagine this same game day, but take away the tap of the drum, the melody of the fight song, and the musical energy radiating off of the field. Collegiate marching bands are integral components of the football game day experience. Typically, interactions between the public and collegiate marching bands are through performances at football games, parades, community performances, and through what is published regarding the bands in the media.

Currently in the United States there are between 700 and 1,000 collegiate marching bands (CollegeMarchingBands, 2016). From the smaller bands to the larger bands of 300 plus members at American universities, collegiate marching bands are practicing and performing for football fans across America. Typically reigning from all majors across a collegiate campus, these musicians elect to participate in their respective bands as an extracurricular activity that is not a requisite for graduation. However, most marching bands are linked to their university's school or department of music and require that members register in a credit marching band class. Ranging from eighteen years old to their early twenties, members of marching bands are often lead by their peers on a selected leadership team as drum majors, section leaders, and squad leaders, in addition to band directors and graduate assistants. Marching bands offer students the opportunity to perform, develop leadership skills, and travel with their

respective bands. Along with the responsibility of striving for the best performances possible and representing their universities, collegiate marching band members are also exposed to the press. Most bands have a press policy and set guidelines for member interactions with the media.

Reading news articles is one of the many ways Americans are learning about the events in both their community and nationally. On a daily basis, an average American will receive around 100,500 words of media. (Harrower, 2013, p. 14). In a study by Liam Corcoran of *The Whip*, it was found that stories published by news organizations are either “short, snappy, and topical” with less than 500 words a story or more long form and “averaging around 1,200 words” (Corcoran, 2013). Taking this into account, the average American reads/hears/watches from just under 84 stories, only taking into account the long form stories to around 201 stories, if they only read the short, topical stories, and any number in between.

Additionally, over half of Americans prefer news that is about serious issues or major events over stories about crime or celebrities. (Harrower, 2013, p. 18). Generally, news media about marching bands fit into this category. Recently, when a band is featured on a national level, they are involved with a major issue that is an undercurrent to major issues in universities across the country. These major issues include hazing and hazing policies, as well as, sexual assault occurrences and on a brighter note, exemplifying great sportsmanship. On a more local level, bands are featured when they are involved with major events in the community, in addition to the coverage that a national newspaper would run.

This thesis will look at three specific collegiate marching bands and how the media framed specific events with which they were involved. The three bands that will be used are The Ohio State Marching Band, the Tiger Band at Louisiana State University, and the Pride of the Wildcat Band at Kansas State University.

## Literature Review

### History of band and marching bands

Historically, collegiate marching bands have undergone several transformations and deviations from their predecessors, beginning with European military bands in the Eighteenth century. These original bands were instrumental in keeping “marching soldiers in time, increasing morale, signaling troop movements into battle, and entertaining the troops” (Bohannon, 2004, p. 7). In the United States, military bands began during the building of colonies. Small ensembles, separate from field bands, of six to eight people would perform at ceremonies and special occasions. During the Revolutionary War, field bands of fifes, trumpets, and drums played soldiers into battle. The drum cadences signaled to the soldiers what they were to do in their day, while trumpets gave the cavalry commands. (“History: Army Music”, n.d.)

As military bands gained popularity, professional civilian bands began performing to entertain crowds and gain money. These civilian bands toured the United States, in addition to the United States Marine Band tours. Under the direction of John Philip Sousa during the late Nineteenth century, the United States Marine Band performed some of his hundreds of marches, yet seldom marched. However, also at this time during their tours in the United States, other bands began to participate in events such as parades. In the 1890s, the sousaphone, used in collegiate bands across the United States today, was created as a marching replacement for the tuba, a brass instrument that is found in concert bands where the musician must be seated to perform. (Bohannon, 2004, p. 9)

At the same time as the United States Marine Band's tours and the popularization of civilian bands, at the university level, marching bands began to appear with relations to ROTC units. Around ten to twenty years later, collegiate marching bands began to take the field during football halftimes. One of the first collegiate marching band halftime performances was in 1907 by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Marching Illini. This band was later referenced by John Phillip Sousa as "The World's Greatest College Band" in the 1920s ("TRADITION", n.d.). The early show formations included making word formations on the field and playing the school's fight songs. However, these bands still had a large connection to the military band style. It wasn't until the 1930s that marching bands broke away and began to perform more creative shows that are seen in halftime shows today. During this time, tempos increased in speed and marching step sizes were standardized to the eight to five step size, about 22.5 inches, that is used today. Additionally, musically, bands began to perform more popular tunes and fewer marches. (Bohannon, 2004, p. 10).

Today marching bands are performing beyond the collegiate football field. In 1967, the National Football League held the first Super Bowl Championship game. The pregame show, National Anthem, and halftime shows were performed by multiple collegiate bands. The bands that performed in the inaugural Super Bowl were the University of Arizona Marching Band, the Grambling University Marching Band, and the University of Michigan Marching Band ("Super Bowl-Entertainment", n.d.). Over half of the Super Bowl Championship games have had a performance by a collegiate marching band. Most recently, the Arizona State University Marching Band and the

University of California, Berkeley Marching Bands have performed during the Super Bowl XLIX and Super Bowl XLX halftime shows. Additionally, marching bands, such as the University of California, Los Angeles and University of Southern California Marching Band have made many television appearances on various advertisements, game shows, and television shows, as well as, appearances in films. (“Bruin Marching Band”, n.d.; “USC Band | Our History”, n.d.)

Beyond Super Bowl pregame and halftime shows and traditional media performances, collegiate marching bands are pushing boundaries and finding new ways to innovate the traditional halftime performance to become more entertaining and eye catching. On October 11, 2014, the University of Michigan Marching Band performed a halftime show titled, “PixMob”. In this show the stadium’s lights were turned off and the band performed the show using PixMob LED lights. Additionally, marching bands are creating shows that depict stories and feature recognizable shapes on the field. The Ohio State Marching Band is one of the most viewed bands for marching these styles of shows, with their October 2013 show, “Michael Jackson Tribute,” having almost 12 million views on YouTube. (OSUBuckeyeTV, 2013)

In addition to rating college bands by their YouTube views and fan excitement, for the last 34 years collegiate marching bands have been honored for their work with the Sudler Award. The Sudler Award, now awarded biannually, awards college marching bands who have “demonstrated the highest of musical standards and innovative marching routines and ideas, and which has made important contributions to the advancement of the performance standards of college marching bands over a number of years” (The Sousa Foundation, n.d.). The goal of this award is to honor

bands who have shown throughout multiple years their contributions to their university, state, and to “the American way of life” (The Sousa Foundation, n.d). To be awarded the Sudler Trophy, a collegiate band must be recommended by a collegiate band director. A recommendation consists of explaining why the band deserves the award, as well as, a performance DVD showing the band’s performances of halftime shows and pregame shows during the season previous to the recommendation. The goal of the award is not to name the top marching band in the United States every year, but to instead honor the accomplishments and contributions a collegiate marching band has made to the art and fans. A collegiate marching band will only ever receive this honor once in their program’s history. All the three bands that will be examined in this thesis have received this prestigious award.

Lastly, today college bands are gaining recognition outside of the college marching band friend, family, and fan base. In 2015, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, website published a ranking article that featured what they considered the top marching band shows from the 2015 season. Additionally, collegiate marching bands are now being included in College Football Fan Index sections of national media websites, with articles specifically featuring the rankings of the bands across the country. And finally, in 2014, Michael Barasch and Ed Sullivan launched College Marching Bands Media. Starting off as Facebook and Twitter pages that featured various collegiate bands performances and accomplishments, College Marching Bands grew into a website that features news articles and listacles about college marching bands, filling the space that traditional media coverage does not occupy.

## **Media Qualifications and Information**

News is one of many types of media consumed by people on a daily basis. The most basic definition of news is “newly received or noteworthy information, especially about recent or important events” (McKean, 2011) Additionally, news can be received in a multitude of ways, including reading paper copies of newspapers, online news articles, and broadcast news. However, only articles from newspapers and online news sources will be analyzed in this thesis. According to Tim Harrower, award winning editor, designer, and columnist at newspapers including *The Times-Union*, *The Oregonian*, and *The Time*, for an article to be considered news, it should include at least one of the following: impact, immediacy, proximity, prominence, novelty, conflict, and/or emotions (Harrower, 2013, p. 19).

The first regularly published newspaper was printed in northern Germany in the early 1600s. The oldest known copy of this paper dates back to 1609. Around 60 years later, the first English printing press was set up, yet it took almost two more centuries before England had a regularly published newspaper (Emery & Emery, 1984, p. 4-5). In the early 1700s, the *Boston News-Letter* became the first successful American newspaper. Before the creation of the first newspaper in the United States, John and Duncan Campbell sent information throughout the colony in the mail using a newsletter format. After nearly five years of sending out information in the mail using a newsletter format, the *Boston News-Letter* was “merely a continuation of the publication the Campbells had been producing” (Emery & Emery, 1984, p. 31). In 1851, 150 years later, *The New York Times* was founded by Henry J Raymond. (Emery & Emery, 1984, p. 151-152) Ten years later, the first major news event with hundreds of reporters

writing and transmitting information began at what is now known as the American Civil War. Reporters used telegraphs to send their news and thus began the news style known as the inverted pyramid. (Harrower, 2013, p.11). News in the style of inverted pyramid begins with a summary of the article's most important facts, with the second paragraph adding background and details. Every paragraph beyond that adds more details to the story. (Harrower, 2013, p. 40).

Fifteen years after the American Civil War ended, in 1880 the first photograph was published in a newspaper. And almost a little over a century later, in 1982, the first color newspaper containing shorter stories, *USA Today*, was published. In between these two dates, the Associate Press began transmitting wire photos in 1934. (Harrower, p. 8-11). The Associate Press is “a not-for-profit news cooperative owned by American newspaper and broadcast members,” that “supplies a steady stream of news to its members, international subscribers and commercial customers” (“ABOUT US”, n.d.). Local news organizations print Associate Press published articles in their papers on a daily basis. Typically these articles are the national and international news articles written from places that the local news does not have reporters posted to. Local news organizations pay a fee to become members of the Associated Press cooperative and receive the news articles and photographs through the Associated Press wire. (“ABOUT US”, n.d.)

### **Media framing theory**

When journalists produce content for news organizations, they are transmitting information about an issue to inform the general public. Generally, information about

specific organizations and communities are brought to the attention of the public through news media coverage. *How* an issue is positioned is the basis of media framing.

Media framing looks at the “precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location—such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel—to that consciousness” (Entman, 1993, p.52-53). Frames are used to diagnose, evaluate, and describe the information that is given. When evaluating the text in frames, “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” are sought. (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Looking at what was not included in articles when comparing topics is equally as important as looking at what was included in the framing of the subject. According to Nicole Dahmen, a visual communication scholar and educator, “when specific frames are lacking in any of the four basic function, audiences are left to fill the gaps or ignore them” (Dahmen, 2008, p. 53).

Additionally, examining media framing includes looking at what information is written, remembered, and why. Through research, it has been found that “frames determine whether people notice and how they understand and remember a problem” and they “select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described” in the article (Entman, 1993, p. 54). When journalists are brainstorming articles and writing news, audiences’ interests are at the forefront of their minds. For smaller local publications that have a smaller, more concentrated audience, the community’s perception of the newspaper is taken into greater consideration than that of a national publication and because of this “smaller communities are more likely to trust their

newspapers” (Reader, 2006, p.854). Here news stories focus on “local people, local sports, and issues that affect the community” (Harrower, 2013, p19). Also, in smaller communities, the connections between the journalist and general community members are greater than in larger publications. In small communities, the journalist “is more likely to have a multiplicity of interactions with sources, knowing them as citizens, members of social clubs, and/or as members of friendship groups” (Reader, 2006, p. 855). When pitching, information processing is also taken into consideration.

According to research conducted by Dietram A. Scheufele, people process information in four ways. These are, “importance, judgment; agency, or the answer to the question; identification with potential victims; categorization, or the choice of labels for the incidents; and generalizations to a broader national context” (Scheufele, 1999, p. 111). Therefore, when analyzing and comparing publications on a specific event, it is important to keep these methods of processing in mind and see how the different publications respond to the various ways mentioned above.

## **Research Question:**

R1: How are three specific collegiate marching band related events covered by the media?

R2: Is there a difference in how collegiate marching bands are framed by local news organizations versus national news organizations?

R3: What is the average amount of time the media covers a collegiate marching band event/controversy?

## Methods of Analysis

This thesis used the theory and methodology of media framing to look at the ways collegiate marching bands are portrayed in the media by multiple large publications. It took and used a purposive sample of publications that have published relevant articles to the three specific events that will be analyzed. These publications include *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fox News*, *USA Today*, *NBC Sports* and *The Huffington Post*. These publications were chosen because they have a large circulation and readership that reaches audiences across the United States and world.

In addition to looking at how large news organizations portray the bands, this thesis examined the texts from the university newspapers and the reports on the events that have been analyzed from the local town/city news organizations of the respective collegiate marching bands. These articles and texts are being analyzed and compared to examine how the choices in framing and explaining the selected event differ between larger national publications and smaller, local publications. The analysis of this thesis looks at the ways news organizations form frames. The analysis and comparison utilizes Scheufele's four types of structural dimensions of news that influence the formation of frames. These are:

1. syntactic structures: patterns in the arrangements of words or phrases
2. script structure: referring to the general newsworthiness of an event as well as the intention to communicate news and events to the audience that transcends their limited sensory experiences

3. thematic structures: reflecting the tendency of journalists to impose a casual theme on their news stories, either in the form of explicit causal statements or by linking observations to the direct quote of the source
4. rhetorical structures: referring to the “stylistic choices made by journalists in relation to their intended effects. (Scheufele, 1999, p.111)

The analysis also examines the various interviewees of the articles that were written about the respective events and the players that were not included in the texts.

Specifically, this thesis looks at how the media framed the incidences of sexual harassment and hazing in collegiate marching bands through the coverage of the firing of The Ohio State Marching Band’s director, at how bands are a family and work to help each other through the examination of the coverage surrounding the Louisiana State University Marching Band after they learned University of South Carolina’s fight song, and at the Kansas State Marching Band’s coverage after their Star Trek halftime field show, which included a set that depicted the Starship Enterprise and the University of Kansas Jayhawk mascot in battle.

## **Case 1: The Firing of Jon Waters, The Ohio State University Marching Band Director**

### **About the Ohio State University Marching Band**

Located in Columbus, Ohio, the “Pride of the Buckeyes,” also known as, The Ohio State University Marching Band is the largest all brass and percussion band in the world. Composed of 225 musicians, the band is audition-based and requires every member to tryout every August before the school semester begins. To help prepare musicians, the band has summer training sessions available. The band is also a tight knit unit and “members of the Band often describe its atmosphere as ‘a family’ with strong bonds formed between students” (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p.2). Nicknamed by their fans, “The Best Damn Band in the Land,” The Ohio State University Marching Band was one of the first collegiate bands to use “floating and animated forms, script writing, and a fast cadence with a high knee lift” in their marching shows and performance (The Ohio State University, n.d.). The tradition of spelling out Ohio in script typography, “is considered by many to be the most memorable tradition in college band history” and has been included in every pregame performance since October 10, 1936 (The Ohio State University, n.d.). Additionally, the dotting of the “i” in the script Ohio set is one of the most prestigious dots<sup>1</sup> a marching band member can receive and is given to a sousaphone who is at least a fourth year member of the band. The band rehearses for around thirty hours a week.

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<sup>1</sup> In marching band, a dot is number a performer is assigned that gives the coordinates of where that performer is supposed to stand for a particular set. The performer follows their “dot” on drill sheets to find where they belong on field during the pregame and halftime performances.

Furthermore, The Ohio State Marching Band is one of the most innovative and best-known collegiate marching bands in the country. Three of their halftime performances, “Hollywood Blockbuster Show”, a video game themed show, and “Michael Jackson Tribute” shows have a combined 46,001,773 views on YouTube in less than four years. Additionally, the band was featured in the January, 2014 Apple iPad Air commercial for their use of iPads instead of paper drill in rehearsal. (Elliott, 2013) Lastly, in 2015, the band performed in London, England “at a pre-game show before the Sunday, Oct. 25, NFL International Series matchup between the Buffalo Bills and Jacksonville Jaguars at Wembley Stadium” (The Ohio State University, n.d.). Thus, The Ohio State Marching Band is a collegiate band that is well known and highly watched in the United States.

**About the event:**

On July 24, 2014, Jonathan Waters, the director of The Ohio State Marching Band, was fired by the Ohio State University. After two months of investigation, the university issued a 23 page Investigation Report that explained all that was found in the investigations that led to the firing of Jonathan Waters. The investigation began on May 23, 2014 after “a parent of a Marching Band member reported information about the Band’s culture to the Office of Compliance and Integrity” (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p. 3). The information from the parent included concerns “that the Band’s culture was sexualized and that its members were made to swear secrecy oaths about objectionable traditions and customs” (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p. 3). This parent’s report was considered to “constitute a complaint under university policy and Title IX,” which requires the university to complete an investigation surrounding

the complaint. (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p.1). After investigation, it was found that:

- The Marching Band's culture facilitated acts of sexual harassment, creating a hostile environment for students.
- Jonathan Waters, the Marching Band's Director, knew or reasonably should have known about this culture but failed to eliminate the sexual harassment, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014).

Following the investigation and firing of Jonathan Waters, many news reports were published surrounding this event and investigation.

### **Findings and analysis**

In total twenty news articles were analyzed surrounding this event. Ten of the articles were from *The Columbus Dispatch* and ten of the articles were from national news organizations including, *Fox News*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *USA Today Sports*, and the *Huffington Post*. The articles that were used were published between the dates of July 24, 2014 and August 30, 2014 and half the articles were published within seven days of the firing of Jonathan Waters. Of those ten articles, three of the articles were published by the local paper, *The Columbus Dispatch*, with the first article by *the Dispatch* publishing on July 25.

Additionally, *The Dispatch* has a section of their website that archives all of the articles that were written about this event. In addition to the articles, the website also contains a timeline of Jonathan Waters' career, the Investigation Report that was issued by the Ohio State University Office of University Compliance and Integrity, and Models A

and B of texts taken from The Ohio State University Marching Band's investigation. Often the nationally written articles would reference the Investigation Report that was published by *The Columbus Dispatch*.

When looking at the headlines of *The Columbus Dispatch* articles, every article's headline was different, yet continued the theme of coverage after Jonathan Waters was fired. It is important to note that headlines are generally written by either the page designer for the news organization or by one of the copy editors. Following the first article published, "Ohio State band director Jonathan Waters may fight firing" (Binkley, 2014a) the subsequent headlines built upon the previous article and gave readers the chance to follow the story and learn all of the details and updates surrounding the event. The subsequent headlines are: "Title IX affected band director's firing, experts say" (Binkley, 2014b), "Waters responds: I was fixing marching band's culture" (Woods, 2014), "Ohio State band alumni aim to reinstate director" (Binkley, 2014c), "Waters wants second chance from Ohio State" (Binkley, 2014d), "Ohio State, fired band director Waters trade accusations" (Binkley, 2014e), "Attorney: Fired band director Waters might sue Ohio State" (Binkley, 2014f), "Ohio State documents show fired band director Jon Waters got glowing reviews" (Binkley, 2014g), "Education Insider: Ohio State band members rebut allegations against Waters" (Binkley and Boss, 2014), "Ohio State shoots down fired band director's demand for public hearing" (Binkley, 2014h), and "OSU hears band alumni, closes case" (Binkley, 2014i). These headlines reflect the changing narrative and how the firing of Waters was not stagnant and instead an ongoing event surrounding the Ohio State University and the Marching Band. The headlines tell the most basic notions and details that surrounded his story and

plight with the Ohio State University. Waters, the main character of the event, has his name included in seven of the eleven articles. This reflects the fact that the news articles are about him and the events surrounding his firing from Ohio State. It is also important to note that the audience, locals of Columbus, OH, professors, and students of Ohio State University know who Jonathan Waters is and will have read, or heard about his firing by the time the later articles went to print. The proximity to the audience allows the copy editor, or author, to create the headline using just his name and band director without needing to give further details. The headlines also depicted the transitions and changes in personnel included in telling the narrative surrounding the event. Finally, the headlines contained a neutral stance throughout in telling the story of the events.

In comparison to the eleven headlines of the articles published by *The Columbus Dispatch*, the national newspapers' headlines were more general and did not include Jonathan Waters' name. However, when compared to each other these headlines are very similar. The headlines were: "Ohio State University fires marching band director" (Associated Press, 2014a), "Ohio State fires marching band director over 'sexualized' culture" (SI Wire, 2014), "'Sexualized culture' cited in firing of Ohio State marching band director" (Bieler, 2014), "Ohio State Fires Marching Band Director After Finding Tradition of Sexual Hazing" (Pérez-Peña, 2014), "Ohio State band marches on after director's firing over alleged 'sexualized' culture" (Associated Press, 2014b), "Fired Ohio State Band Director Vows To Clear Name" (Associated Press, 2014c), "Ohio State fires band director over 'sexual culture'" (Litman, 2014), "Here Are the Dirty, Sexual Things Ohio State's Band Did That Got The Director Fired" (Kingkade, 2014), and "Ohio State Alumn Says Fired Band Director Protected Sex Assault Victim" (Carr

Smyth, 2014). Despite being published at different publications, these nine headlines are all composed of the same words and have the same meaning. Every headline contains the words, “Ohio State”, “fires” or “fired”, and “band director” and most of the headlines also contain the words, “sexualized culture”. However, the slight differences in headline word choices reveals the differences in the thematic structures of the various news organizations represented in this sample. *The New York Times*, a more formal and traditional newspaper, is very direct in their headline, yet also vague in that it does not directly reveal that Waters was fired for a sexualized culture within the band, but instead states that he was fired “after finding a tradition of sexual hazing” (Pérez-Peña, 2014). In contrast to *The New York Times* headline, *The Huffington Post* headline being a more innovative and online news website, was significantly longer in length and used more adjectives to describe the event. The lengthiness of the headline can be contributed to the fact that this article was only published online and did not have to fit within physical publishing size constraints. This headline, “Here Are the Dirty, Sexual Things Ohio State’s Band Did That Got The Director Fired” (Kingkade, 2014) also differed from the other headlines in that it places the blame of the firing of Waters on the band and the students instead of on the actions of the band director, or in a more general statement that placed the blame on the culture and not on a single group or person. The emotion evoked in this headline, pulled in readers’ interest more than the other headlines listed and works almost to being considered a click bait headline. Lastly, the majority of these articles were published in the days following the firing of Jonathan Waters and the headlines reflect that. They complete the task of informing readers that the Ohio State University Marching Band director has been fired

and that he has been fired after an investigation that found a sexualized culture in the band and that the subsequent article will fill in the details that explain why he was fired and why it has made national news.

In addition to being used in the majority of the national headlines, the phrase “sexualized culture” in the band was a phrase that was used in fourteen of the twenty articles. However, in the report that the reporters used and referenced, the phrase, “sexualized culture” is never written outright. Instead the report speaks about the band having a sexualized culture in three instances and then continues on to describe the hostile environment of the band and the different acts of sexual harassment that were committed. The phrase “sexualized culture” was first used in the Investigation Report on the first page, “The parent was concerned that the Band’s **culture** was **sexualized**” (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p.1). Although not the exact phrase, “sexualized culture”, the words, “sexualized” and “culture” were found again on page 15 of the Investigation Report under the Analysis section, stating, “In a **culture** so **sexualized** for so long...” and “the misconduct described is highly **sexualized**, frequent, and longstanding as part of the Marching Band’s **culture**” (*Complaint against Jonathan Waters*, 2014, p.15). The phrase, “sexualized culture” was not a heavily used phrase in the document. Despite those words not being heavily used in the Investigation Report, the reporters latched onto the phrase, as it works to summarize and describe the sexual harassment, and hostile environment of the band during the investigation period.

The articles that did not include the words, “sexualized culture” either included the phrase “lewd culture” or went on to describe in further detail the nature and traditions of the band that led to the firing of Jonathan Waters. Instead of narrowing the

accusations and findings down to using, “sexualized culture,” *The Washington Post* instead quoted Ohio State University President Michael Drake and gave some of the details and examples that were cited in the Investigation Report and offered a link to the report for audiences to read if they chose. After linking to the report, the article warned readers of the content found in the report stating, “but readers are warned that it contains quite a lot of graphic language” (Bieler, 2014). Nevertheless, the article did include the phrase, “sexualized culture” in the headline. The choice of using the phrase in the headline over using it in the body text allowed Des Bieler, the author, to give some of the examples of the events that occurred in the band that led to the sexualized culture. The primary text of this article was blocks of pulled quotes from the Investigation Report.

In the same fashion that the majority of the national newspapers’ headlines had similar word choices and phrasing, every national newspaper had at least one sentence describing The Ohio State Marching Band, the success that it has had on the field and in media the months years previous to the investigation, and/or a brief history of who Jonathan Waters was and his involvement with the band. Phrases in these articles include “celebrated marching band” (Associated Press, 2014a), “earned national acclaim for its extravagant halftime performances” (SI Wire, 2014), “its popular marching band” (Bieler, 2014), “its renowned marching band” (Pérez-Peña, 2014), “nationally recognized for its traditions and innovative routines” (Litman, 2014), “increasing national attention for impressive field displays” (Kingkade, 2014), and “halftime shows considered revolutionary” (Carr Smyth, 2014). These phrases lend national readers a context to the brevity of the situation and explain why the firing of

Jonathan Waters was worthy to become national news. Also, one third of the articles, which were taken from the Associated Press Wire and published by different news organizations, included information on how Waters was innovative and “revolutionize” or “changed shows by drawing them out on iPads instead of paper” (Associated Press, 2014c). Similarly, a different one third of the articles included information on how the band was included in an Apple commercial in January 2014. Thus, the statements made by these articles prove to readers that The Ohio State Marching Band is one of the most known collegiate marching bands in the country and has been nationally recognized for their innovation and performances. One wonders if Waters had been a band director at a smaller lesser-known university with a less public band if his firing would have received the same amount of national attention.

Despite every national article including a phrase about the popularity and distinction of the band, the articles placed the descriptions at different times in the articles. Four of the articles included the information about the band at the top, in the opening few paragraphs of the article. This approach allows readers to have context and knowledge on the marching band from the start of the article. By including information about the band here, these articles are attracting readers to continue reading to find out why this popular, successful program has had their director fired. When compared to the inverted pyramid style of news writing, by placing the information about the band’s history at the top, the writer is putting emphasis and showing the importance of the information being more than a mere detail. Here the band’s history is equally important to the story as the breaking news of Waters being fired.

One article included the information in the middle of the article, using the description as a transition between ideas. In this article, “Fired Ohio State Band Director Vows to Clear Name” (Associated Press, 2014c), the opening paragraphs are focused on statements released by Jonathan Water’s attorney and why Waters thinks he should have kept his job. The description of the band comes after the statements defending Waters to show the success he has had with the band- “He changed the shows by drawing them out on iPads instead of paper” (Associated Press, 2014c) before moving on to explaining the event and why Waters was fired. By using the history of the band as a turning point and transition in the article, the author is putting more emphasis on Waters and subsequently his band than on the events that resulted in his firing.

The last four articles placed the paragraph describing the marching band and its popularity and success at the very end of the article after the explanation and evidence on why Waters was fired. By placing it here, the articles are placing more emphasis on the sexual harassment and findings from the Ohio State University investigation and why Waters was fired over the successes that the marching band under his direction had seen in the previous months and years. Also, by placing the information in the last paragraph or two of the article, this information can be seen as more of a detail that adds to the article than as a fact that gives the article its substance. In the inverted pyramid style of writing, the last paragraphs are considered added details that fill in background that are not absolutely needed for the article to inform the readers of the news. If space was limited, these last paragraphs would be cut from the article.

In contrast to the national newspaper discussed above, the local newspaper, *The Columbus Dispatch*, did not include such phrases and detailed information about the Marching Band and its successes in every single article it published in the series about Waters. This information was not included because the paper can assume the audience of *The Columbus Dispatch* has a base knowledge of the successes and short history of The Ohio State Marching Band. Having gained national attention, the citizens of Columbus and followers of the university have already celebrated and acknowledged the band. This information would be redundant for the audience and slow them from getting the information needed to understand why Jonathan Waters was fired. The band's successes were no longer the newsmaker; instead the shock and news of the director being fired took its place.

However, when the papers did include the similar phrases, these phrases were included to show the effects on the band's future and how the accolades hid the problems in the band. Like one of the national newspapers, the article, "Ohio State band director Jonathan Waters may fight firing," (Binkley, 2014a) published on July 25, used giving information about the band as transition paragraphs. The article began the transition from informing readers about the basics of Water's firing and that his plans on fighting to clear his name with the sentence, "The firing and revelations are a major setback to the 225-member marching band— known as 'The Best Damn Band In The Land' and the 'Pride of the Buckeyes'" (Binkley, 2014a). Continuing in the block of transition the article tells readers about his introduction of the use of iPads in the band and how they have received millions of views on their posted performances online. The following sentence, "He has also been the face of the band, appearing on national talk

shows as a marching expert” adds more detail on how Waters was recognized in the marching band world and by Ohio State University (Binkley, 2014a). Completing the transition into the details that explained what caused Waters to be fired was the sentence, “But behind that glamour, witnesses said, was a ‘culture of intimidation’ that kept secret the traditions that bothered some students” (Binkley, 2014a). By adding in the paragraphs that explain the successes that Waters brought to the band and how he was the face of the band, the article moves smoothly from Waters defending himself through his lawyer to the facts and details on why he was fired.

Overall, the first articles published by *The Columbus Dispatch* went into greater depth, contained more community connections and interviews, and were longer in length than the articles that were published on July 24 and July 25 by the national news organizations. Logically this makes sense, the local newspaper has more connections and opportunities to interview those involved in the events that are in their own town. The article, “Ohio State band director Jonathan Waters may fight firing”(Binkley, 2014a), published the day after the announcement of his firing gave audiences extensive information on the reason why Waters was fired, but also quoted Water’s attorney- David Axelrod, Dr. Michael Drake-the Ohio State University President, and various community members that have been involved with the band. The national articles do not quote Davie Axelrod, nor do they quote community members involved with the band. The proximity and connections that Collin Binkley had by being a reporter at *The Columbus Dispatch* allowed him to get these opportunities and interviews that the national reporters did not have. Local newspapers have the advantage on connections

within the community when reporting on news that becomes national breaking news because the reporters are living and working daily on the news within that area.

Another advantage that local newspapers such as *The Columbus Dispatch*, have is that there are reporters assigned to specific beats who become the experts on those subjects. Collin Binkley, now an Associate Press reporter, wrote nine out of the eleven of *The Columbus Dispatch* articles that are analyzed in this thesis. One article he co-wrote and one article was written by a different reporter. When Binkley was reporting on the events surrounding the firing of Jonathan Waters, he was assigned to the higher education beat. Being a reporter for the higher education beat, it can be assumed he had working knowledge of the system of communication within the Ohio State University, and that he already had established plans on how to get the interviews with those involved within the university. His article was the only article to state, “reached by phone, Waters referred questions about the firing to his attorney” ((Binkley, 2014a). None of the national articles mention getting in contact with Waters himself. Either the national news organizations did not attempt to interview Waters or did not have the contact information to connect with Waters.

Binkley also wrote in a very distinct style that is more representative of articles published by a local newspaper. Almost every article written by Binkley on Waters and the events surrounding him ended with a quote from someone in the community, or from a university official.<sup>2</sup> Only two of the national news articles ended with a quote in

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<sup>2</sup> ““The sign becomes obsolete if Jon’s no longer the director of the Ohio State band”” (Binkley, 2014a). ““Oftentimes, the brunt of a decision falls on the person in charge,’ she said. ‘That’s what comes with being the person in charge.’” (Binkley, 2014b)

the final paragraph. These articles were from *The New York Times* and *Fox News* using *Associated Press*<sup>3</sup>. These quotes however, rarely added anything to the story or were of much importance and could have been left out of the story without changing the narrative. Yet, despite not adding anything to the articles, the quotes serve the purpose of concluding the article and leaving the reader with feeling a connection to the article and those involved.

In contrast to ending the articles using quotes, the majority of the national news articles analyzed ended with a statement that informed readers about the future of The Ohio State Marching Band, the future of the Jonathan Waters, or concluded with history of the band. By ending these articles with statements<sup>4</sup> about either the past or the future

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“‘The band is feeling really supportive, and we are all closer because this has happened. We don’t feel like we’re falling apart,’ said Glecker, of Marysville. ‘We’re still trying to be a better band than we were last year’” (Binkley, 2014c)

“‘It’s not my action to take to the reverse the dismissal,’ he said, ‘I am here telling my story, and I am here to set the record straight after the report was issued. And those decision-makers will have to come to that conclusion’” Waters (Binkley, 2014d)

“‘Incidents of harassment and hostility are not tolerated at this university,’ he [Dr. Drake] said, ‘and, in light of our recent investigation, we must do better to make our campus an open and welcoming environment for all students’ (Binkley, 2014e)

“‘Provost Joseph Steinmetz wrote: ‘Pursuant to our conversation yesterday, we regret to inform you of your termination from university employment effective July 24, 2014’” (Binkley, 2014f)

“‘The Ohio State University has had an outstanding year under the leadership of Dr. Alutto,’ said Timothy P. Smucker, a board member. ‘We are certainly indebted to him for his service’” (Binkley, 2014h)

<sup>3</sup> “‘Several students stated that alcohol use and abuse is a large part of the marching band’s culture,’ the report said, a point also made by the physical therapist. Mr. Waters acknowledged to investigators that alcohol abuse was a ‘big problem,’ and that it was involved in the sexual assault last fall of one band member by another, who was later expelled from the university” (Pérez-Peña, 2014)

“‘There are an infinite number of ways that people can bond that are not really demeaning and anachronistic,’ he [Dr. Drake] said”. (Associated Press, 2014a)

<sup>4</sup> “‘Drake said the band season will go on as usual as the search for a new director begins. Members of the 225-member band are scheduled to perform this weekend with the Columbus Symphony, in an annual event considered the unofficial start of its season” (Associated Press, 2014a)

“‘The Ohio State marching band has earned national acclaim for its extravagant halftime performances, including one during a game against Penn State last October in which members formed the outline of a dinosaur” (SI Wire, 2014)

of The Ohio State Marching Band, audiences are left with a feeling of completeness. The strategy of ending talking about the future follows the format, “present, past, future” that news articles could be written in.

Lastly, all twenty articles had many similar feature people that the articles focused on and quoted. Fittingly, the person most written about was Jonathan Waters, as he was the reason that the articles were being written and published. Yet, despite being the most featured character in the articles, he was rarely/never directly quoted in the articles printed the day after his firing. The only times he was quoted was when the article included quotes taken from his interviews during the investigation that were published in the Investigation Report. By directing all questions to his attorney, David Axelrod, Waters also did not make himself available to be interviewed and quoted in the articles. However, only *The Columbus Dispatch* article that was published on July 25 acknowledged that he was unavailable for interviews, “reached by phone, Waters referred questions about the firing to his attorney” (Binkley, 2014a). By not having the opportunity to interview and include quotes from Waters himself in the first articles printed regarding his dismissal, readers of the articles can only learn so much about

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“Given the amount of Title IX and school violations (including alcohol abuse) contained in the report, Ohio State felt it had no choice but to fire Waters. Band Members will also receive counseling and training in issues of sexual harassment, discrimination and violence” (Bieler, 2014)

“A spokesman said the university was required to promptly perform the probe under federal Title IX sexual discrimination laws. The university appointed former Ohio Attorney General Betty Montgomery to lead an independent follow-up review” (Associated Press, 2014c)

“The Ohio State Marching Band has been nationally recognized for its traditions and innovative routines. Waters has served as director since October 2012 and was an interim director, assistant director and graduate assistant before then. He was a member of the band as a student from 1995-1999.” (Litman, 2014).

“Music professor and Director of University Bands Russel Mikkelson and Associate Director of University Bands Scott Jones were appointed this week as interim leaders of the marching band.” (Kingkade, 2014).

“Message left Monday with a university spokesman weren’t immediately returned”(Carr Smyth, 2014)

Waters and the situation. Readers are left wanting to know more from Waters himself instead of through the grapevine of reports and people. A week later, Waters did conduct his first interview since his firing and was directly quoted in *The Columbus Dispatch*.

Another person that was featured in most of the articles was the Ohio State University president, Dr. Michael Drake. Although described and introduced by the reporters in various ways, he was directly quoted in the articles. Quoting the president of the university that just fired one of their most prominently known professors is a must and for the reporters a readily available resource. After it was released that Jonathan Waters was fired for the sexual harassment and environment of the band, Dr. Michael Drake released a video explaining the incident and his perspective on it and how the band and university community will grow from it. His quotes used in the articles were of two mindsets: explaining<sup>5</sup> his shock and disappointment of the findings in the investigation, or one<sup>6</sup> speaking about building community at Ohio State and creating a safe environment for the students. Dr. Drake made sure to emphasize the importance of having a safe university free of harassment<sup>7</sup> when talking to reporters and releasing statements. The latter came in the form of a released statement by Ohio State.

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<sup>5</sup> “Fledgling Ohio State President Michael Drake, on the job just three weeks, said he acted after being ‘profoundly disappointed and shocked’ by the findings of a two-month investigation that began before his arrival” (Associated Press, 2014a).

<sup>6</sup> “Nothing is more important than the safety of our students. We expect every member of our community to live up to a common standard of decency and mutual respect and adhere to university policies. Moving forward, we must abide by a zero tolerance policy at the University — both with the Marching Band and the entire campus community—for any behavior that creates a hostile culture at Ohio State. I view this as a new day and an opportunity for the Ohio State community to come together and embrace the values and behavior that have made this University great” (Binkley, 2014a)

<sup>7</sup> ““Even one instance of harassment or hazing or assault is one too many””(Pérez-Peña, 2014).

The quotes from Dr. Michael Drake are important, as shown by their use in every article examined. If not included, the news articles would be missing a very important aspect and perspective on the event. The articles would lose credibility and informative sustenance if they did not include him.

Equally important to the credibility and informative sustenance of the articles published was the use of direct quotes and summarization of the Investigation Report released by the Office of University Compliance and Integrity at Ohio State University. The early reports and all of the national reports based their articles around the evidence and findings that were released in the Investigative Report. The articles only differed in how much of the report that they decided to use and whether they provided a direct link to the report for readers to go and read further.

A major difference between the reporting done by the national newspapers and the reporting done by Collin Binkley at *The Columbus Dispatch* was that Binkley included quotes from interviews with community members involved with the band, band alumni, and a band member. The inclusion of these characters and their quotes not only made the article more heartfelt and interesting, it also separated the articles from the sameness and monotonous information that was found in the national based news articles. Also, by including interviews with these people, a different point of view and a more diverse set of information was presented to aid readers in forming their own opinions regarding the event and issue.

One of the major voices and interviews that was not included in the majority of the articles was the perspective of the members who were in the process of auditioning/re-auditioning and becoming members of The Ohio State Marching Band.

The articles only present the facts that were found during the investigation, which did not interview a majority of the band. The references to hazing, sexual harassment, and culture of the band would be stronger and more believable if there were quotes from band members talking about it. On the other hand, the articles would become stronger if readers could learn the opinions of the band members or their director. Out of twenty articles, only one article quotes a band member and the quote<sup>8</sup> is very brief but impactful. According to Hannah Glecker, an Ohio State University student who at the time of the interview was trying out for her fifth year in the band, “most students had refused to talk to reporters about the firing. But now some squad leaders are telling students to speak out if they have opinions” (Binkley, 2014c). Another reason students were not interviewed and included in the articles is that The Ohio State Marching Band probably has a press policy for the members and guidelines set on what they can and should say when accepting an interview with the press. Currently, in order to gain access to a band member and interview them, an online form on The Ohio State Marching Band’s website must be filled out and submitted for approval. It is not unusual for collegiate marching bands to have press policies and guidelines for their members to follow.

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<sup>8</sup> ““The band is feeling really supportive, and we are all closer because this has happened. We don’t feel like we’re falling apart,” said Glecker, of Marysville, “We’re still trying to be a better band than we were last year”” ( Binkley, 2014c).

## **Case 2: LSU Marching Band performs the South Carolina University fight song/alma mater**

### **About the Louisiana State University Tiger Marching Band**

Dating back to 1893, with the first football halftime performance coming in 1924, the Louisiana State University Tiger Marching Band is the largest student organization on the LSU campus. Averaging 325 members, the band is an audition-based band. The band's instrumentation has woodwind sections, brass sections, a color guard, drum line, and the Golden Girls Dance Line. Despite being an audition-based band, only twenty percent of the band members are music majors, with the other eighty percent representing the various majors on the LSU campus. In the past, the band has performed at Mardi Gras parades, at New Orleans Saints games and other NFL affiliated games, Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and in high school marching band competitions. In 2002, the band was awarded and honored with the Sudler Trophy. (LSU Department of Music, n.d.)

### **About the event:**

In the first week of October 2015, South Carolina received an abnormally large amount of rain. This rain caused around eleven dams to break while the state watched over another 35 found within South Carolina. The dam breakage caused flooding and town evacuations. In addition to watching the dams and attempting to control their breaching from breaking them, the state's Emergency Management division evacuated towns where the dams broke. Additionally, "More than 400,000 state residents were under a 'boil water advisory' affecting about 16 water systems, said Jim Beasley, a

spokesman for the S.C. Emergency Response Team” (Yan & Sanchez, 2015).

Columbia, one of the towns evacuated for flooding, also experienced looting in the evacuated apartments. In Summerville, caskets at a cemetery were unearthed and floating in the floodwaters.

Because of the damage and strain the flooding caused throughout South Carolina, the University of South Carolina canceled classes for the week of October 6. When canceling classes, university officials released this statement:

At this time, we have determined it is in the best interest of our students and the local community to cancel classes for the rest of the week. Resuming normal operations for 34,000 students and 6,000 faculty and staff at this time will place an undue burden on a recovering infrastructure in the city. That number of individuals coming to the city center at this time would hinder the recovery efforts.

While city water service has been restored to campus, there is no certainty that it will remain constant, available and safe. We are in a boil water advisory which impacts our ability to provide food service and other essential services to a fully operational campus. (Svrluga, 2015).

After canceling classes, the university then announced that their home football game against Louisiana State University would be relocated and played at LSU.

Because of the short notice, the University of South Carolina Marching Band was not able to arrange to travel and attend. Once it was released that the game would be moved and played at LSU, the Tiger Marching Band students wanted to help their fellow band mates at USC. Their director, Roy King, contacted the USC Marching Band director and the LSU band received the Gamecock fight song and alma mater with enough time to rehearse and perform the songs at the game. LSU also donated all proceeds from the football game to the Gamecocks and tried to make the road game for them as pleasant as possible.

## Findings and analysis

In total, ten articles were analyzed surrounding this event. Five of the articles were published locally and five were published by national news organizations. The four local articles were published by *The State*, the local newspaper in Columbia, South Carolina; *LSU Reveille*, Louisiana State University's student newspaper; *WTHR13*, an Indianapolis news station; *The Advocate*, a Baton Rouge newspaper; and *SEC Country*, a sports news website that covers only SEC sports. The national articles were published by *NBC Sports*, *The Washington Post*, *Fox Sports*, *USA Today*, and *ESPN*. These articles were published between October 8 and October 11.

The headlines<sup>9</sup> of these articles varied from focusing on the Louisiana State University Tiger Marching Band to focusing on LSU's efforts to comfort the Gamecocks as a whole. Of the ten articles, eight articles' headlines included and referenced the LSU marching band, also known as the Tiger Band. Additionally, six of the articles' headlines spoke about the LSU band learning and performing the USC fight song and alma mater. The four articles that did not include referencing the USC fight song and alma mater were either more general in talking about the bands- "LSU band to

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<sup>9</sup> "USC Band not heading to LSU, but Tiger Band will help fill in" (Staff Reports, 2015)

"Tiger Band to play South Carolina alma mater and fight song for Saturday's game"(Masse, 2015)

"LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song" (LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015)

"LSU band to learn South Carolina alma mater and fight song for Saturday's game" (Barbato, 2015)

"LSU-USC ticket sale profits donated back to South Carolina" (Barnett, 2015)

"Here's why LSU's band will play the South Carolina fight song" (Bieler, 2015)

"A 'Sandstorm' in Baton Rouge: LSU band to recreate SC's pregame ritual" (A 'Sandstorm' in Baton Rouge: LSU band to recreate SC's pregame ritual, 2015)

"LSU marching band will play South Carolina's fight song after flooding devastates state" (Kerr-Dineen, 2015a)

"Video: LSU Tiger Band practices South Carolina fight song, alma mater before Saturday matchup" (Advocate Story, 2015)

"SEC Week 6 helmet stickers: Hats off to LSU's hospitality" (Aschoff, 2015)

recreate SC's pregame ritual," (A 'Sandstorm' in Baton Rouge: LSU band to recreate SC's pregame ritual, 2015) "Tiger Band will help fill in" (Staff Reports, 2015), or did not mention the band at all- "LSU-USC ticket sale profits donated back to South Carolina" (Barnett, 2015), "SEC Week 6 helmet stickers: Hats off to LSU's hospitality" (Aschoff, 2015). The articles that did not include talking about the LSU Marching Band in the headline gave significantly less attention to the act of the LSU Marching Band in comparison to those that included the band in their headlines. Both articles were national articles that were very short in length and focused the article on giving more of a summary of the game and why it moved stadiums over what the band was doing to help the Gamecocks. However, it is important that these articles be included because marching bands were referenced and included.

Over half of the articles referenced or included, embedded tweets as a part of the article and narrative. The use and inclusion of Twitter and embedding tweets is a relatively new tool as "journalists are inclined to respect a certain source hierarchy in which they ascribe more credibility to official elite sources, such as known experts and representatives of political and business institutes, than to unofficial sources, such as ordinary citizens" (Paulussen, 2014, p. 546). However, embedded tweets were used in six out of the ten articles. In total, eight different people/twitter<sup>10</sup> accounts were used in the articles, but only one of the authors of the embedded tweets would be considered an

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<sup>10</sup> These people/Twitter accounts include: Jacques Doucet, a sports anchor in Baton Rouge; USC Bands, the official University of South Carolina Band Twitter account; Harris Pastides, the President of the University of South Carolina; Scott Rabalais, a columnist and sportswriter for *The Advocate*; Adam Rittenberg, an ESPN reporter; Lee Goble, a University of South Carolina student; Kelsey Wingert, a *KALBT* sports director and anchor; and LSU Football, the official twitter account from the Louisiana State University football department.

“ordinary citizen.” Of the eight, Jacques Doucet’s tweet, “#LSU band is learning South Carolina Gamecocks’ alma mater + fight song, plans to incorporate in pregame, per Roy M King” was the most used in the articles. It was embedded in three of the articles that contained tweets. By using this tweet, the reporters did not need to contact Roy King, the LSU Marching Band director and trusted that Doucet, a sports anchor in Baton Rouge, was reliable and giving audiences the correct information. In skipping interviewing Roy King, the reporters of the articles spent less time setting up and interviewing the director and in return it can be assumed the article was written in a shorter time period. However, by using the tweet and not going into the field and setting up interviews with Roy King and potentially other members of the community, the articles that used the tweet are very similar and audiences are thus reading more generalized and homogenized information. The use of embedding tweets in an article should be one that is used sparingly and only when absolutely needed. The articles that did not include tweets were more informative and had a more personal tone than those that only used tweets and did not conduct interviews with the involved parties.

Because over half of the articles included embedded tweets in the articles in place of interview quotes, the ten articles had little variation in who was included and interviewed for the articles. Six articles either directly or indirectly quoted Roy King, the band director of the Louisiana State University Marching Band. Unlike the articles that featured tweets that referenced King and his band’s preparation, the articles that interviewed and directly quote Roy King included more detail and gave more attention to the Tiger Band and its preparation for performing the University of South Carolina

alma mater, fight song, and the song “Sandstorm” at the relocated football game. Direct quotes from King included:

- ““We are passing out the music today and hopefully we will sound just as good as the South Carolina Band”” (Masse, 2015)
- ““They were very appreciative and I’d think they’d do the same thing for us if the tables were turned”” (Masse, 2015)
- ““There have been a few times over the years, when circumstances beyond anyone's control have come to bear that have caused a massive change in everyone’s plans. Over the years, whenever that has occurred, Tiger Band has always answered the bell” (Masse, 2015)
- ““In some bands, it’s a long standing tradition of playing the opposing team’s alma mater, but those traditions are more based in the Big 10 and other conferences. In the SEC we don’t really do that, but this is a special set of circumstances”” (LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015)
- ““I was contacted by a number of our band students inquiring to what we could do for them, and so we came up with this gesture. We thought it was the appropriate one””(LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015)
- ““The were very appreciative, and they sent the music to us. We had it in time for rehearsal. I think it sounds pretty good. So we’ll be able to incorporate that in our pregame show”” (LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015)

- ““The Tiger Band students have always answered the bell. I told the students it was their turn to answer the bell, and they of course have”” (LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015).

These quotes gave readers an insight to the band and the actions of the band surrounding the event allowing them to have a better understanding. The articles that did not interview and quote King contained no information about how the students were involved in the decision to perform the USC songs at the game. They also did not include the details on how the rehearsals for the game were going, or on how the USC band was appreciative. The detail on the differences between the different football conferences was a detail that showed readers a measurement of the magnitude and the significance of the LSU Tiger Band learning the USC songs and going against SEC traditions.

In addition to having more information and credibility, the articles that featured direct quotes from Roy King, read differently than those that only included embedded tweets, included quotes from the press release by the University of South Carolina, or included a quote from an athletic director from either of the schools. The tonality of the articles that included few direct quotes from the various key players in the event read as if they were a press release and were very formal. The information was presented to the readers directly with little elaboration. Though these articles were quick to read, they were not very engaging and did little to capture audiences. On the other hand, the articles that included many direct quotes from those directly involved were far more entertaining and easier to read. These articles were structured with more of a narrative arc about the Louisiana State University Marching Band and also included more

adjectives to describe the band and their preparations. For example, the opening sentences of the articles depict the differences from the get go. One of the articles that interviewed King opened with the sentence, “The sounds of instruments ring inside the band hall as the Tiger Band practices South Carolina’s Alma Mater for the first time” (Masse, 2015). Whereas an article that only included embedded tweets as quotes opened with: “It’s been a tough week for the state of South Carolina. Storms wrecked the state’s capital after dumping more than 11 trillion gallons of water on the state, and early estimates suggest damage from the flooding could cost upwards of \$1 billion” (Kerr-Dineen, 2015a). The first example article opener brings readers into the band room and sets up the article to be about the marching band, whereas the second example gives readers little knowledge that the article will go on to discuss and inform readers about the actions of the LSU Tiger Band. The first article from the start was set up to frame the band, while the latter was set-up to act more formally and discuss the damage and moving of the football game in its entirety.

Additionally, the formatting and extent of interviews of the articles differed depending on the ranking of the news organization that published the article. The articles that were written for the local news organizations were the articles that read more as an informative narrative story and the national articles read more as a press release telling the country what was happening in Columbia, South Carolina and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The national articles used embedded quotes to give the articles detail, or quoted the athletic directors, or USC President Harris Pastides. None of the national articles directly quoted Roy King, LSU Marching Band students, the USC Marching Band director, or USC Marching Band students. These articles also did not give as

much attention to talking about the band's efforts as the articles that did quote King and/or his students. Instead these articles focused on the larger picture of what the various departments of Louisiana State University were doing, as well as, the efforts the community of Baton Rouge were making. Being relatively short, these articles only discussed the bands for a single or two paragraphs and then moved on focusing efforts "to make Tiger Stadium 'home-like' for South Carolina" (A 'Sandstorm' in Baton Rouge: LSU band to recreate SC's pregame ritual, 2015). The articles also discussed how, "LSU will sell tickets to its fan base – starting with season-ticket holders and working down the totem pole from there – but donate all profits back to South Carolina" (Barnett, 2015) and why the game was relocated, "With swaths of South Carolina still dealing with the aftermath of deadly flooding, putting major stress on infrastructure and emergency personnel, officials decided to move the game to LSU's stadium" (Bieler, 2015). Thus, the framing of the articles from the local news organizations was more favorable and featured the collegiate marching bands than the national based articles that were written surrounding this event.

Surprisingly, only one of the ten articles included an interview and quotes from a band student involved in the event. The only article that included a band student interview was, "Tiger Band to play South Carolina alma mater and fight song for Saturday's game" by the *LSU Reveille*, the LSU student newspaper. In addition to interviewing and quoting Roy King, Jacquelyn Masse, the article's author, also interviewed and directly and indirectly quoted Joseph Devereaux, a Tiger Band member. According to the article, "The game's relocation to Baton Rouge is a surprise to the 200 band members who did not plan on performing this weekend, but Tiger Band

member Joseph Devereaux said it's worth it" (Masse, 2015). Devereaux was also quoted saying, "I definitely feel for all the people on the east coast and South Carolina. Being from Louisiana, I can relate so I'm sympathetic and empathetic to them" (Masse, 2015). Despite only being a few sentences, these quotes make the difference for the article and also give it uniqueness and distinction amongst the other nine articles. Including the voice of the collegiate band member in an article about a collegiate band is important and a must do. Without the voice of the band member, the story is either one-sided or reads as an emotionless press release, information based article. One would think that an article about a band's preparations and willingness to perform another band's music would include more quotes and interviews with the band students involved.

However, a second local article, "Video: LSU Tiger Band practices South Carolina fight song, alma mater before Saturday matchup," published by *The Advocate*, also only focuses on the band and their preparations and provides a link to a different article that gives more details on what LSU and the community is doing for the relocated game. Very short in length, this article gives readers a small peak into the band's preparations and also links to a video<sup>11</sup> that shows how the band is preparing: "A video from thestate.com also shows the band polishing every note of the alma mater before the big game" (Advocate Story, 2015). Despite not quoting King or band students, this article does give readers the information needed about the band and their preparation. It frames the band in a positive manner and gives the band the sole focus and attention within the article.

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<sup>11</sup> This video is not being used or considered in this thesis.

Overall, in all of the articles, the Louisiana State University Tiger Marching Band was written about and framed in a positive way. The articles included details about the band or solely focused on the band because they were breaking SEC tradition and performing another school's alma mater, fight song, and pre-game tradition song. Although not directly talking about the Tiger Band, descriptions of their actions include:

- “The players and fans [from USC] who make the trip will at least hear a familiar tune. Even without the USC band in the building” (Staff Reports, 2015)
- “LSU president has told me that their band and fans will pay tribute to our flood victims on Saturday. That is a class act!” (Staff Reports, 2015)
- “On Saturday, the Tiger Band will show up to Death Valley and think of the friends, family and band members in South Carolina” (Masse, 2015)
- “Louisiana State University Tiger fans are used to hearing the Tiger Band play the university's Alma Mater, but come Saturday, you'll hear them play a bit of a different tune” (LSU marching band learns & plays USC alma mater, fight song, 2015)
- “The LSU band will play South Carolina's fight song” (Barnett, 2015),
- “But the fans in Baton Rouge will see – and hear – something perhaps even more odd: LSU's band playing the South Carolina fight song” (Bieler, 2015)
- “Thus, in a terrific gesture, LSU's Golden Band from Tiger land will sub in and honor their unexpected guests” (Bieler, 2015)

- “The Gamecocks will be benefitting from a musical concert catered to their needs courtesy of the LSU marching band” (A ‘Sandstorm’ in Baton Rouge: LSU band to recreate SC’s pregame ritual, 2015)
- “LSU’s marching band is stepping-up with a classy move of its own. The school says its band is learning South Carolina’s alma mater and fight song and will play both at game” (Kerr-Dineen, 2015a)
- “To make the Gamecocks feel more at home, the band will also play their fight song during the matchup” (Advocate Story, 2015)
- “South Carolina even ran out onto the field to its traditional entrance music from ‘2001: A Space Odyssey.’ Good on you, LSU” (Aschoff, 2015).

These descriptions either gave the LSU band accolades for their work towards welcoming the Gamecocks football team and fans, or provided readers the details needed for them to make their own connections and see that the LSU band’s actions were deserving of the media attention that they were receiving.

## **Case 3: Kansas State University Marching Band’s Jay-Hawk field formation**

### **About the Kansas State University Marching Band**

The Kansas State University Marching Band, also known as the “Pride of the Wildcat Land,” is composed of 300-400 band members. Unlike The Ohio State Marching Band and the Louisiana State University Marching Band, the Kansas State University Marching Band is open to all students and does not require an audition to join. Like the LSU Marching Band, the Kansas State University Marching Band’s instrumentation is composed of woodwinds, brass, a color guard, a drumline, and a dance line. The band was established in 1887 and first performed at an athletic event in 1899. Today the band hosts K-State Band Day, a day where, “approximately 2000 high school and middle school students converging each year on Manhattan, the day-long event includes a morning parade through the center of town and a massed band performance at halftime of that afternoon's home football game at Bill Snyder Family Stadium” (Kansas State University, n.d.). In the past years, the band has performed at “NFL exhibitions, bowl games, parades and festivals, and countless alumni, charity, and community events,” in addition to performing at Kansas State University home football games. The band is the most recent recipient of the Sudler Award and received the honor in 2015.

### **About the event:**

On Saturday, September 5, 2015, the Kansas State University Wildcats played their first football game of the season against the University of South Dakota Coyotes.

This was also the first performance of the season for the Kansas State University, “Pride of the Wildcat Land” Marching Band. During the halftime period of this game, the marching band performed a Star Trek and space themed halftime show. After the first minute of the show, the band marched to a set that formed to make their rival, University of Kansas mascot, the Jayhawk, and the Star Trek Enterprise spaceship. When audiences viewed this set and sequence of sets as the Enterprise spaceship floated across the field and blew up the Jayhawk, they did not see what the band had intended. Instead of viewing the field formations as the intended Jayhawk and Enterprise, they instead thought the Enterprise form resembled and looked like a penis that was moving into the Jayhawks mouth. Following the performance of the halftime show, social media accounts, such as accounts on Twitter, began to explode with postings about the show and how the band formed a penis shape on the football field. Because of the uproar, media began to cover the performance after the fact.

Unfortunately, this set was performed at the first football game of the year and the first game that Kansas State University students were required to sign a good sportsmanship clause when they picked up their tickets as a part of an initiative to elevate the school’s respect and sportsmanship during university athletic events. During this season, the Big 12 Conference was also working towards becoming known as the conference that had the universities and students with the best, most respectful actions at sporting events, reflecting good sportsmanship.

As a result of the show and the field formation that included another school’s mascot, the Big 12 Conference became involved and began an investigation. During this investigation, the marching band was not punished or found to be in trouble for their

formation that some thought looked like a penis, but were instead reprimanded for making their rival's mascot when the football team was not playing that school. The Big 12 Conference did not fine the school and marching band. However, to show that they were taking the event and matter seriously, the administration of Kansas State University decided on a self-imposed \$5,000 fine. The school also suspended the band director, Frank Tracz for the football game on November 28 against the University of Kansas and required the band to have their halftime shows approved by athletic department administration before performing at football games. Once alumni and band members learned that the band would be fined \$5,000, which the university ended up paying, an online fundraiser was set up for the band. Because the university paid the fine, the money raised for the band was given to the band to be used for new instruments and scholarships.

### **Findings and analysis**

In total, thirteen articles were analyzed surrounding this event. Six<sup>12</sup> of the articles were local articles written by either the *K State Collegian*, the Kansas State University student newspaper, or *The Mercury*, the newspaper of Manhattan, Kansas where Kansas State University is located. The seven<sup>13</sup> national articles are from *USA*

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<sup>12</sup> "K-State halftime show leads to questions about sexual innuendo, band member denies any ill intentions" (Parton, 2015b)

"K-State administrators silence Tracz" (Parton, 2015 b)

"Halftime fallout KSU suspends band director 1 game, will pay \$5,000 fine"(Staff Reports, 2015b)

"Tracz: We did nothing wrong" (Richardson, 2015)

"Hundreds donate to support band" (Staff Reports, 2015c)

"Passion & Pride K-State Marching Band members moving forward" (Jackson, 2015)

<sup>13</sup> "Kansas State apologizes for 'offensive' halftime show" (Kerr-Dineen, 2015b)

"K-State marching band apologizes for shot at Jayhawks" (Associated Press, 2015a)

"Marching Band in Hot Water Over NSFW Halftime Performance" (Mazza, 2015)

"Kansas State suspends its director of bands after 'offensive' halftime show" (Kerr-Dineen, 2015c)

"Phallic-Looking Starship Causes Problems for Kansas State Marching Band" (Associated Press, 2015b)

Today, *The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Fox Sports*. Additionally, three of the national articles were written by the Associate Press and published by the different news organizations-*The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Fox Sports*. The articles that were AP were, “K-State marching band apologizes for shot at Jayhawks”, “Phallic-Looking Starship Causes Problems For Kansas State Marching Band”, “K-State fans stand by marching band after halftime show”. These articles were written and published between September 5 and September 18, 2015. Almost half, six out of the thirteen, of the articles were published between September 6 and September 8. These dates were within one week of the event that spurred the articles and media interest. Only one of the articles was published the same day as the incident on September 5. Fittingly, it was an article written and published by *The Collegian*.

As the event surrounding the Kansas State University Marching Band was investigated, there were many elements that accompanied their narrative. The headlines of the articles, both local and national, were varied and reflected these various aspects of the event. However, many of the headlines included similar words, including “halftime” which was included in six of the headlines; “Kansas State [or] K-State Marching Band” was included five times; “Tracz [or] band director” was included in four headlines; phrases lending the meaning of supporting the band, “hundreds donate” and “fans stand by” were included in two articles, and sexualized type words including, “offensive”, “sexual innuendo”, “NSFW”, and “phallic-looking”, were included in five of the headlines. It is surprising that only six of the headlines included the word,

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“K-State fans stand by marching band after halftime show” (Associated Press, 2015c)  
“Kansas State says it will pay fine after band performance” (Skretta, 2015)

“halftime show”, because the articles were written as a result of a set in the Kansas State University Marching Band halftime performance. Additionally, it is worrisome that only five of the thirteen articles include the words, “marching band”, in the headlines. The articles were written about the actions of the marching band and the repercussions the band is facing for their halftime performance. Leaving out, “marching band” from the headline takes away the focus of the article from being on the band to focusing on the steps that Kansas State University administration were taking or on Frank Tracz, the KSU marching band director. Although the headlines varied in how they introduced the topic and event to the readers, the variations and similarities reflect the content of these articles and how the organizations covered the event.

The focus of the articles varied depending on when the articles were published. The three articles that were published the night of and following day after the September 5 performance focused on the one set where “the band depicted a scene between the Starship Enterprise from Star Trek and a giant Kansas Jayhawk” as well as the immediate reactions on twitter from fans, university officials, and the band director (Parton, 2015a). When discussing this set, the different articles included and highlighted tweets<sup>14</sup> that were sent out about the event, as well as, included statements from the Kansas State President, Kirk Schultz, and the Kansas State University Marching Band director, Frank Tracz that were sent out via twitter. In the hours following the performance, “ a video of the Star Wars and Star Trek-themed” performance “went viral, drawing jokes and attention” (Staff Reports, 2015b). The first article published

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<sup>14</sup> “We apologize for anyone offended by our halftime performance depicting the starship enterprise and the Jayhawk mascot” K-State Marching Band @KStatePride (Kerr-Dineen, 2015b)

was a local article by the *K-State Collegian*. The following day, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* published articles on the band and the event. All three articles were only a few paragraphs long and included very little detail and extra interviews beyond the embedded tweet or quoted statement<sup>15</sup> released by the marching band's Facebook page, K-State Marching Band. These two statements gave readers immediate information about the event and published more detailed articles the following days once more was known and interviews were secured. But, two thirds of the articles did not read like press releases and contained phrases that gave the respective article character. These phrases include "a barrage of comments" (Parton, 2015a) and "if that's what is was *supposed* to be, it didn't really turn out that way" (Kerr-Dineen, 2015b), and "set social media ablaze" (Associated Press, 2015a). Thus these first articles gave the most basic needed information pertaining to the event with enough pizzazz in word choice to separate them and make each article slightly different. The three publications that published these first three articles wrote additional articles days later with more information. These later articles also included components about the immediate reaction of the fans, university officials, and band director, but also included information on the Big 12 Conference reaction.

Additionally, the word choice to describe what people thought the Starship Enterprise was differed between publications. In general, the Starship Enterprise shape

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<sup>15</sup> "The chart below represents the drill from tonight's show. There was absolutely no intent to display anything other than the Enterprise and the Jayhawk in battle. If I am guilty of anything it would be the inability to teach drill in a manner that these young people could have succeeded. I do apologize for the misinterpretation and I assure you that I meant absolutely no disrespect or malice toward the University of Kansas.'

Frank Tracz  
Director of the K-State Marching Band" (Partron, 2015a)

was described as resembling male genitalia or as being of phallic nature. Of the thirteen articles, five articles contained the words, “male genitalia” when describing the formation created by the Kansas State Marching Band. Equally as popular, the word, “phallic” was also used in five of the articles. “NSFW”, “penis”, and words referencing an act of sexual nature<sup>16</sup> were also included in the articles. “NSFW” was used in three articles, while “penis” was used in only one article. *The Huffington Post*, an online news organization, was the publication that used the word, “penis” to describe the shape of the Starship Enterprise. The two most popular choices among the articles examined, “male genitalia” and “phallic”, are more gentle words that do not directly tell readers what certain members of the audience of the football halftime show thought they saw. Words that are related to sex, sex organs, and sexuality are more of a taboo subject in the United States. The adjectives that these articles chose reflect that.

In addition to describing the shape that the halftime show audiences saw the Starship Enterprise formation resembling, ten out of the thirteen articles included information and details on the involvement of the Big 12 Conference investigation and involvement with the event. Forty-six percent of the articles included at least one paragraph about the Big 12 Conference involvement with the event. After the event, Bob Bowlsby, the commissioner of the Big 12 Conference, “issued a public reprimand of Tracz [the band director] for ‘the inappropriate use of a member institution logo’” (Richardson, 2015). The band was not punished because of the shape the Starship Enterprise resembled to some, but instead for using another university’s mascot in their

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<sup>16</sup> These words included, “follatio” (Patron, 2015, a) and “adult-oriented in nature” (Associated Press, 2015a)

show when that university was not the opponent of the sporting event. Recently, the Big 12 Conference has begun a push towards having exemplary sportsmanship at all conference games. The conference outlines this in their Big 12 Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct Policy. Forty-six percent of the articles referenced the policy and its relation to the K-State Marching Band formation and show. Because this was the first violation of the policy since it was enacted, the Big 12 went to the administration of Kansas State University to aid in figuring out what the punishment should be when a band uses another university's mascot in a negative manner. Kansas State University took this and gave themselves a self-imposed \$5,000 fine paid to the conference, suspended Frank Tracz from the November 28 football game against the University of Kansas, and now requires the band to submit their halftime shows for approval before performing them at the games. The Kansas State Athletic Director, John "Currie said this action sets a precedent that the Big 12 is serious about enforcing sportsmanship" (Richardson, 2015). These punishments were explained in the articles. Sixty-two percent of the articles included the self-imposed fine, sixty-two percent included Frank Tracz's suspension, and forty-six percent included KSU's requirement that the band submit their shows for approval before performing. Three articles that did not include information on these punishments were the three that were published within 48 hours of the incident. The last article<sup>17</sup> that did not include a single reference to the Big 12 and the Kansas State University punishment was written by *The Huffington Post*. This article only focused on what the set looked like to viewers. By not including the

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<sup>17</sup> "Marching Band in Hot Water Over NSFW Halftime Performance" (Mazza, 2015)

information about the Big 12 Conference and the self-imposed punishments from KSU, this article is less informative and useful. The article was published September 8, four days after the event occurred and thus had plenty of time to find the information and include it as the other articles did.

Three of the articles, published days after the event took place and were taken from the *Associated Press* wire, included many similar phrases and a few quotes and sections that were exactly the same despite being picked-up and published by different news organizations. Two of the articles<sup>18</sup> are exactly the same for the first three paragraphs, with the difference coming after the third. The article published by *The Huffington Post* differentiated itself from the same wire article by including an embedded video after the third paragraph. The next differentiation comes at the end of the article, three paragraphs from the bottom. Again, *The Huffington Post* included an image of what the Starship Enterprise and Jayhawk set were supposed to look like. *The Washington Post* article was strictly text. Despite being exactly the same article, the authors credited for the AP article were different. *The Huffington Post* article states, “Associated Press freelancer Tate Steinlage contributed to this report,” while *The Washington Post* article says it was written by “Dave Skretta, *AP Sports Writer*.” A third article<sup>19</sup> from the AP wire is overall drastically different from the two articles analyzed above. However, this article includes one paragraph that is exactly the same as the other two articles. This paragraph is, “The controversy erupted after Saturday’s

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<sup>18</sup> “Phallic-Looking Starship Causes Problems For Kansas State Marching Band” (Associated Press, 2015b)

“Kansas State says it will pay fine after band performance” (Skretta, 2015)

<sup>19</sup> “K-State fans stand by marching band after halftime show” (Associated Press, 2015c)

space-themed halftime show during the team's home opener against South Dakota. One formation featured the Kansas State band forming the University of Kansas mascot and a phallic-looking Starship Enterprise crashing it" (Associated Press, 2015b). The articles that are not from the AP wire each describe the event slightly differently, making the articles more interesting. The author of this article is not listed, so it is unknown if it was written by the same people who wrote the other two articles.

Overall, the articles included the voices of the same handful of people. These people include: Frank Tracz, the Kansas State University Marching Band Director; Kirk Schulz, the Kansas State University President; William Shatner, the actor who played Captain Kirk in the original *Star Trek*; John Currie, the Kansas State University Athletic Director; Bob Bowlsby, the Big 12 Conference Commissioner; Sarah Brinkley, a KSU band alumna who started an online campaign to raise funds for the band, and various other voices that were only included in a few articles. The most talked about and quoted character in the articles was Frank Tracz. He was included in all thirteen of the articles. Primarily his released statement<sup>20</sup> was included, with only three of the articles including quotes taken from an interview with Tracz. The next most quoted person was William Shatner. His tweet was quoted or embedded in four of the articles. Shatner was included

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<sup>20</sup> "The chart below represents the drill from tonight's show. There was absolutely no intent to display anything other than the Enterprise and the Jayhawk in battle. If I am guilty of anything it would be the inability to teach drill in a manner that these young people could have succeeded. I do apologize for the misinterpretation and I assure you that I meant absolutely no disrespect or malice toward the University of Kansas."

Frank Tracz  
Director of the K-State Marching Band" (Patron, 2015a)

as one of the supporters of the band. He tweeted<sup>21</sup> many times giving his opinion and supporting the band's formation. His inclusion shows how many people were reached and reacted to the band's performance and the surrounding actions stemming from the single set. After Shatner, three characters are tied for the number of articles they were included in. These characters are, Kirk Schulz, John Currie, Bob Bowsby, and Sarah Brinkley. Each of these people was included in three of the thirteen articles. Schulz, Currie, and Bowsby are characters of administrative positions, while Brinkley is an alumna. It is surprising that Schulz, Currie, and Bowsby were not quoted and interviewed for more articles. They were the ones reviewing the incident and creating the band's punishments. One article did not quote anyone, instead only included Tweets. This article<sup>22</sup> was very short and lacked depth.

Like the other events analyzed in this thesis, the band members of the Kansas State University Marching Band were rarely interviewed and included in the articles. In two articles, an anonymous band student was quoted and their photograph of the marching drill was included. The reason given for the anonymity was, "A member of the band, who wished to remain anonymous due to instructions given by band officials, shared a photo to Facebook and said the band's only intention was to show a fight between the starship and the Jayhawk" (Patron, 2015a). Because the members were advised not to talk to media, their voices were not included from the articles and narrative about their band. However, one of the thirteen articles included quotes from

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<sup>21</sup> "Yes! Did you see the plan for the formation? It's exactly this" (Mazza, 2015), A tweet with the photo of the drill (Mazza, 2015), "I wonder if Mother Nature needs to apologize for cloud formations with these same people?"(Staff Reports, 2015, b) and "I think it's time for the @Big12Conference leaders to step down and get their eyes checked. What a travesty!" (Associate Press, 2015b)

<sup>22</sup> "Marching Band in Hot Water Over NSFW Halftime Performance" (Mazza, 2015)

three members of the Kansas State University Marching Band. The focus of this article differed from the other twelve articles. This article focused on the events that the band had coming up in the their season and mentioned the Jayhawk drill incident in a two paragraph passing. The members that were interviewed were student leaders of the band-all three were drum majors. We can assume that these members were selected by Tracz or other band staff members to talk to the media. Generally, marching bands allow the selected student leaders to talk to media before a general member is selected. Lastly, the articles that were published locally differed from the articles that were published nationally. The local articles gave more detail stories as to what was happening with the band after their performance. The first article published on the matter was from *The Collegian*. This publication also set-up a question and answer session with Tracz, that unfortunately did not happen at the originally planned time. Because this session changed, an article was written and included more details as to what was happening to the band. The local articles also stayed with the band and subject longer than the national articles and included an article featuring what the band was doing in their upcoming season. This article<sup>23</sup> was published on September 18, a little under two weeks after the initial articles and incident. The local articles were also longer in length and quoted more of the administration from Kansas State University. The articles published by *The Mercury* did not use embedded tweets and rarely quoted tweets in their articles on the Kansas State Marching Band. The focus of these articles was less on the shape that the band created on the field and the taboo surrounding it and more focused on what was happening to the band because of the set they performed.

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<sup>23</sup> “Passion & Pride: K-State marching band members moving forward” (Jackson, 2015)

The national articles hooked on to the taboo of the shape of the set. Many of the opening hook sentences<sup>24</sup> of the national articles reflect this idea. These articles did more highlighting and included more tweets about the shape of the set. They did however include some information about the repercussions the band was facing after performing said set.

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<sup>24</sup> “An innocent mistake of a crude shot at a rival?” (Mazza, 2015)  
“It hasn’t been a good week for the Kansas State marching band” (Kerr-Dineen, 2015c)

## **Conclusion**

In total, 43 articles were analyzed to look at how three specific marching band related events were covered by the media. Of the 43 articles, 21 of the articles were from local news organizations and 22 of the articles were from national news organizations. Overall, despite covering differing events, the firing of The Ohio State University Marching Band director, Jonathan Waters; The Louisiana State University Marching Band performing the University of South Carolina fight song and alma mater; and the Kansas State University Jayhawk field formation, the local and national news media groups framed the bands in similar fashions. In answering research question number two, it was found that there were also similarities between the local organizations' coverage and the national organization coverage. The differences between the two levels of organizations were also found in the analysis of the three events. Lastly, the average time of coverage of the events related to the bands by media was within one week of the event. However, local media tended to continue to publish articles related to the event weeks after the incidence and weeks after national media stopped.

To start to answer research question number 1, the majority of the articles contained similar language when discussing the bands and their surrounding events. Generally the articles were written in a conservative manner. The two events that dealt with what could be deemed explicit material were discussed by the news organizations using words such as, "sexualized culture", "NSFW", and "phallic". By using more conservative, less graphic language, the news organizations are appealing to the largest audience possible and working to offend the smallest percentage of their readership.

Overall, the local and national articles differed from each other, but had many similarities when the framing of the events are compared. In general, when looking at all of the locally written articles, the articles for each event built upon the previous article. The breaking article, usually the first article published on the event, is more general. As time passed, the latter articles published contain immense amounts of details, feature many interviews, and were longer in length. These local articles featured far more interviews with local community members that were either involved or affected by the marching band's event. This occurrence can be contributed to the proximity of the reporters to the community members and the already formed trust and relationship with the community. Also, the local articles were generally written by the same handful of reporters. All of the articles, but one, written by *The Columbus Dispatch* were written by the same reporter. This is because at local news organizations, reporters are assigned to topical beats. Their job is to cover all events that are related to the topic. By having one person assigned to the beat, the new organizations are also building relationships between the reporter and members of the community of their assigned beat. These relationships allow the publications to include more interviews and more details about the bands.

Like the way the local articles contained similarities when compared, the national articles also contained similarities when compared to each other. Predominantly, nearly all of the national articles included at least one paragraph with a description of the collegiate marching band that was being covered in the article or a paragraph on the collegiate marching band director that was involved with the event. These paragraphs primarily focused on the history of the band or the director before the

event took place. It can be deducted that these paragraphs were included in the national articles as background information paragraphs. Nationally, the percentage of readers that have knowledge about the respective is really small. To fully understand the articles the importance of the event surrounding the band, audiences need to have a base knowledge of the band and/or band director. Additionally, the majority of the national articles ended with an informative statement. This statement informs readers of either future performances of the band or facts about the next step in the event's investigation. These statements work to conclude the piece, but leave the reader with enough information on the event to continue following if they choose. This differs from the local articles ending with quotes. This ending leaves readers with a more personal touch, yet is less informative as the national articles' statement endings. Lastly, the national articles were primarily based on statements, reports, or Tweets sent out by the universities of the marching band. Because they did not have the advantage of close proximity for interviews, the reporters of the national articles used the available resource of released statements. This usage of statements and reports lent to the more factual and informative tone of the articles when compared to the narrative nature of the local pieces.

In addition to the similarities of word choice the articles also feature similar voices. The most featured, discussed, and interviewed person in all of the articles discussed was the marching band director from the respective school the articles focused on. The directors that the articles featured include: Jonathan Waters-the now ex Ohio State Marching Band Director, Roy King-the Kansas State University Marching Band Director, and Frank Tracz-the Kansas State University Marching Band Director.

The articles featured released statements or direct interview quotes from these directors. As the marching band director, these men became the face of their band, or in the case of Jonathan Waters, he became the face and person blamed for the problems found within his band. The inclusion of the band directors in ALL of the articles is pertinent to telling the story of the bands and their relating events. Generally, the marching band director runs the show for the collegiate band and makes all of the important decisions that affect the band. Therefore, they are the person in the marching band organization that has the most information about their band's actions and events. The marching band director should be the first person interviewed and included in articles that feature collegiate marching bands.

The second most included group of people featured in the articles about the bands was either a university administrator or a university spokesperson. These people gave the articles the wider view and scope of how the bands worked within the university and how the university was handling the band. The inclusion of this group of people brought the added collegiate level expertise to the articles that could not be replicated by community member interviews and statements. Like the inclusion of the marching band directors in the articles, the university administration/representatives were included by either a statement that was released as a result of the marching band's event that sparked the media coverage or in the form of direct or indirect quotes from interviews with reporters.

Unlike the inclusion of the university's marching band director and university administration/representative, the members of the collegiate marching bands were rarely included in the articles that were about their bands. Of the 43 articles that were analyzed

in this thesis, these less than 10 of these articles featured an interview or quote with a band member. The exclusion of these voices leaves a void in the articles. It is obvious in the articles that the band members' voices are not apparent. This exclusion could be the result of two things. Either the reporters are not making the effort to contact the bands to find a member to interview, or the bands have policies that are set up that do not allow members to talk to reporters and the media. In both instances this very important voice and component is missing from the articles and discussion of the band's events.

To help with the exclusion of the band members' voices in the articles, the reporters working on the articles could interview a member of the band that is a part of the student leadership team. These people could include the band's graduate student directors, the drum majors-the students who direct and conduct the band on the field during pre-game and halftime performances, the section leaders, and/or the squad leaders. These student leaders have been chosen by the band director and band staff for their leadership characteristics and are well versed in the intention and actions of the band. The bands could also include a section on their website that works as a form for reporters to become in contact with band members. The Ohio State University Marching Band currently has this kind of form on their website. Additionally, the collegiate marching bands should create press policies and guidelines that make their members, especially members of the leadership team, more open to accepting interviews by reports writing articles about the bands. By having the press policy and guidelines created, the band members will be heard, while the directors know that not any member, especially those that do not have all of the information, are interviewed. Additionally, collegiate bands could work with their respective university's journalism

school or communication programs to teach members how to represent themselves and the band when talking to media. A workshop could be created to teach band members the interviewing process that is done by reporters. Mock interviews could be done by students in the journalism school with the band members.

In conclusion, the media covered the three marching band events-the firing of Jonathan Waters, the Ohio State University Marching Band Director; the performance of the University of South Carolina's fight song and alma mater by the Louisiana State University Marching Band at a football game moved due to flooding; and the reaction to the Kansas State University Marching Band's halftime show field set that was supposed to look like a University of Kansas Jayhawk and *Star Trek's* Starship Enterprise. In looking at their coverage, the media published the most articles within one week of the event occurring, with extra coverage later on coming from the local news organizations. The different news organizations gave all of the information needed to fully understand the events and bands involved. But, the voice of the band member was generally excluded and should be included in articles relating to bands in the future. However, the news organizations, both local and national, brought attention to the bands and their events and educated readers about collegiate marching bands.

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