

Never Marched Survey

163 responses (September 2021-December 2021)

Have you ever participated in marching band?

- Yes - 153 (93.9%)
- No - 10 (6.1%)

Have you ever participated in a WGI group (winter guard, winter percussion, etc.)?

- No- 99 (60.7%)
- Yes- 64 (39.3%)

Have you ever marched in a drum corps? (DCI, DCA, SoundSport at your discretion, etc.) If yes, this survey is not intended for you.

- No - 162 (99.4%)
- Yes - 1 (0.6%)

Have you ever participated in another performing art medium?

- Band (not marching) - 134 (84.8%)
- Orchestra - 69 (43.7%)
- Choir - 72 (48.1%)
- Theater - 67 (42.4%)
- Dance - 43 (27.2%)
- Other - 6 (3%)
 - Fife & drum corps - 1
 - Colorguard, Musical corps, Instructor - 1
 - Concert band, taiko drumming - 1
 - Gigs - 1
 - Indoor drumline (non-WGI) - 1
 - Show Choir Back Up Band - 1
- 6 selected none
- 30 only selected 1
- 127 selected 2 or more

Do you currently or do you plan on continuing to participate in any of the above performing art mediums?

- Positive/Yes - 125 (76.7%)
- Negative/No - 31 (19%)
- No Response - 7 (4.3%)

What is your home state or province?

Arizona: 4 (2.4%)
California: 24 (14.6%)
Connecticut: 4 (2.4%)
Delaware: 1 (0.6%)
Florida: 3 (1.8%)
Georgia: 2 (1.2%)
Hawai'i: 1 (0.6%)
Idaho: 2 (1.2%)
Illinois: 26 (15.9%)
Indiana: 8 (4.9%)
Kansas: 1 (0.6%)
Kentucky: 2 (1.2%)
Louisiana: 2 (1.2%)
Maryland: 4 (2.4%)

Massachusetts: 4 (2.4%)
Michigan: 6 (3.7%)
Minnesota: 2 (1.2%)
Missouri: 3 (1.8%)
Nebraska: 1 (0.6%)
Nevada: 1 (.6%)
New Jersey: 1 (0.6%)
New York: 5 (3%)
North Carolina: 1 (0.6%)
Ohio: 15 (9.1%)
Oklahoma: 2 (1.2%)
Oregon: 1 (0.6%)
Pennsylvania: 6 (3.7%)
Tennessee: 4 (2.4%)
Texas: 14 (8.5%)
Virginia: 5 (3%)
Washington: 1 (0.6%)
West Virginia: 1 (0.6%)
Wisconsin: 2 (1.2%)

No response: 4 (2.4%)
International:
Ontario (Canada): 1 (0.6%)

States not represented:

Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Colorado
Iowa
Maine
Mississippi
Montana
New Hampshire
New Mexico
North Dakota
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Utah
Vermont
Wyoming

How Old Are You?

14-21: 39 (23.9%)
21+: 124 (76.1%)

Are you a member of a marginalized community?

Yes: 96 (58.9%)
No: 64 (39.3%)
Did not respond: 3 (1.2%)

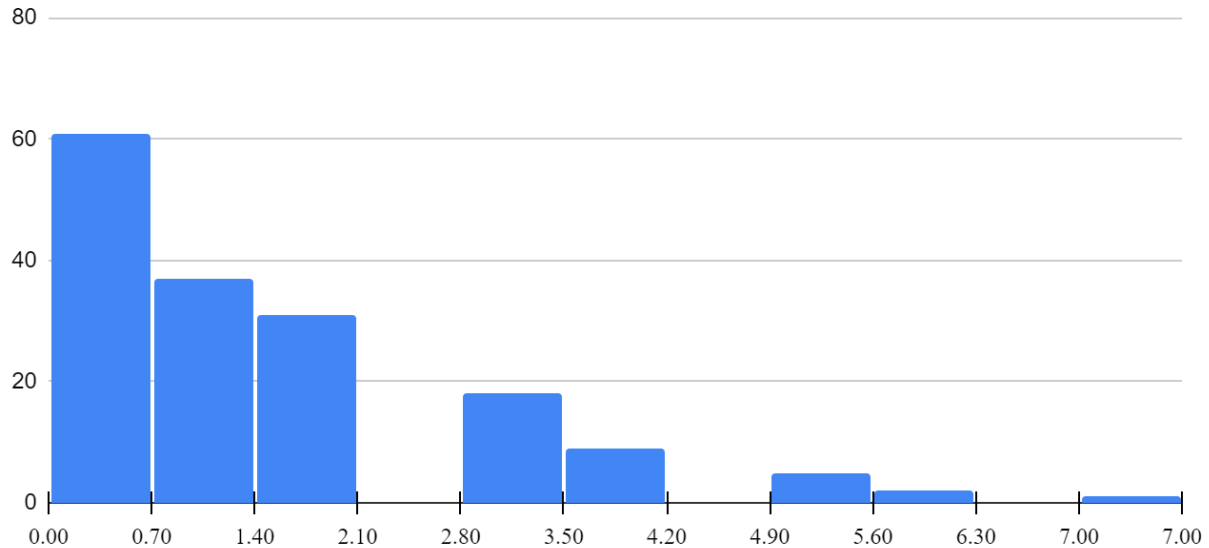
Which marginalized communities do you belong to?:

I am racially/ethnically marginalized: 20
 I am gender marginalized: 48
 My sex is marginalized: 39
 My sexual orientation is marginalized: 50
 I have a disability: 19
 I am a member of a marginalized religion (relative to North America): 6
 I am outside the average age of my ensemble: 2
 I am marginalized because of my SES: 16
 I am plus-sized and or marginalized because of my body type: 34

Histogram of amount of marginalized communities belonged to:

0: 61
 1: 37
 2: 31
 3: 18
 4: 9
 5: 5
 6: 2
 7: 1

If you are comfortable, please let us know which marginalized communities you belong to:



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Why didn't you march? (select all that apply; multiple selected answers per survey response)

163 respondents:

Ensemble Culture/Reputation/Community Presence

Intimidated by the time/work commitment - 51
 Have heard horror stories about the activity - 42
 Bad experiences with people who've done drum corps - 36
 Fear of unsafe conditions - 32
 Fear of discrimination - 24
 Did not hear about drum corps until I was too old - 20
 I auditioned but didn't join because I didn't like the staff - 6

I auditioned but didn't join because I didn't like the other people - 5

Access

High Cost - 131

Summer Job - 71

My instrument is not played in drum corps - 50

Health/Disability Concerns - 36

All the ensembles are too far away - 35

I did not have a way to travel to auditions/camp - 30

Musicianship/Skill

I auditioned but I didn't get a spot - 15

Confidence/Perception of own skill

Did not feel good enough - 70

Did not feel prepared by prior marching/band experience - 46

Did not seem physically possible for me - 43

Personal Choice:

Wanted to keep my summer open - 31

Genuinely not interested - 23

Disapproval from Authority Figures:

Parent/guardian disapproval - 24

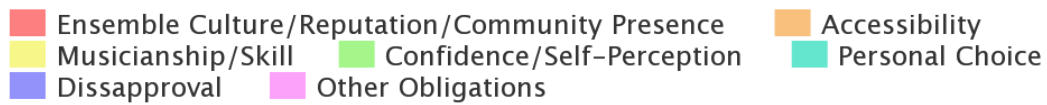
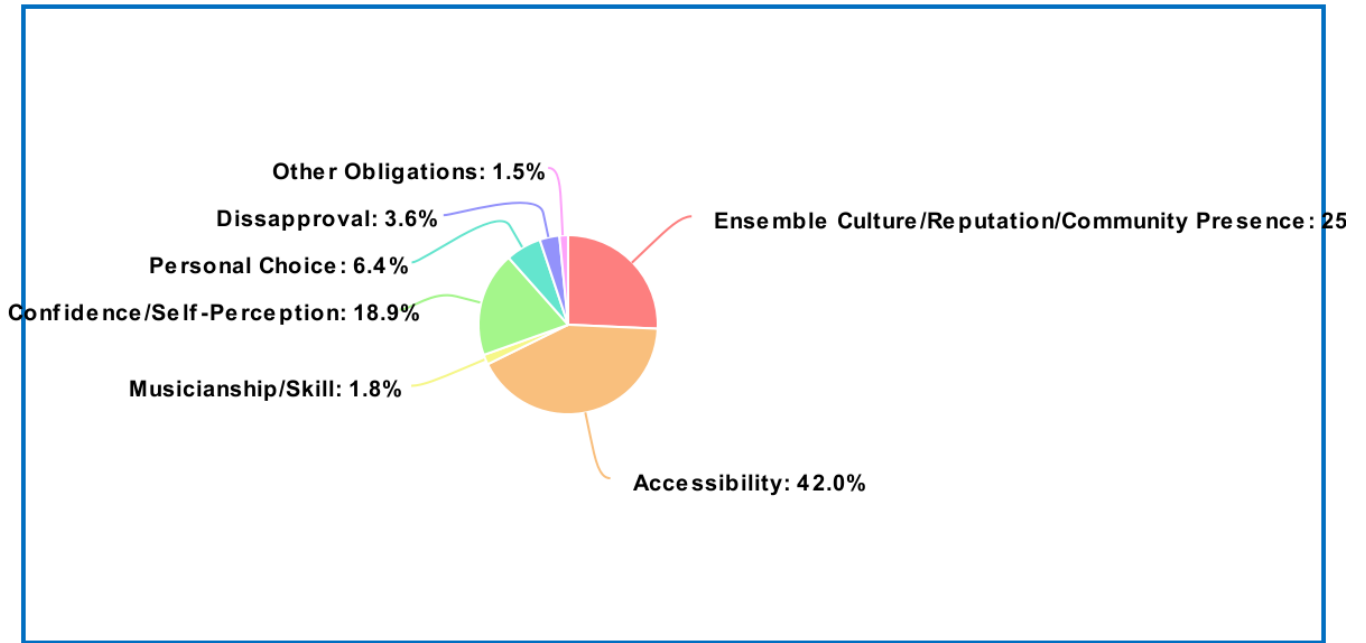
My school band teacher discouraged me from joining - 6

Other Obligations:

Summer school - 12

Competitive summer sports - 1

Reasons for Not Marching Drum Corps

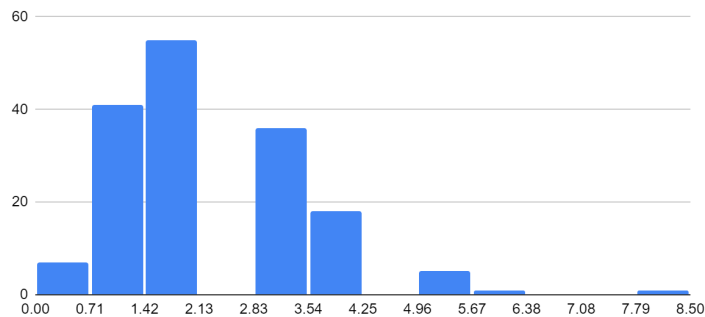


meta-chart.com

M: In what ways do you intend to continue being involved with marching arts, music, and/or performing beyond participating as a student ensemble member?

- Performing Musician - 75 (47.5%)
- Music Educator - 63 (39.9%)
- Audience - 118 (74.7%)
- Volunteer - 63 (39.9%)
- Composer/Designer - 33 (20.9%)
- Single Responses:
 - Visual Staff

Distribution of number of categories in which a person continues to participate in activities outside of drum corps



In what ways do you intend to continue being involved with marching arts, music, and/or performin...

- 0: 7
- 1: 41
- 2: 55
- 3: 36
- 4: 18

- 5: 5
- 6:1
- 8: 1

N: Are you interested in volunteering or working with a drum corps?

- No - 110 (71%)
- Yes - 45 (29%)

L: Please feel free to include any further information or explanations you find relevant to why you have not participated in drum corps:

Time/Cost/Parents

The cost of DCI vastly outweighed the gain for me. I could make what I would have to pay in a summer job

I think it is ridiculous to pay thousands of dollars to be pushed to your limits and make the corps money.

For me, it was mostly because of financial issues and not being able to afford drum corps.

Auditions cost \$100 which is not worth it if I do not end up on the team.

Just money and time commitment that I didn't have

I did not participate in drum corps because the cost of traveling to an audition, along with the time commitment was more than I could give up.

Can't afford to lose a summer working, rely on paycheck to paycheck or afford to pay for an empty apartment if I couldn't get a sublease

It was mainly just due to the high cost and disapproval of my parents, so I wasn't able to pay for it at all and was not able to attend any in person camps after virtually auditioning

Always wanted to, but it's really unrealistic because of money reasons. I'd need to save up for an absurd amount of time to just get in, and then somehow have enough money leftover for the whole season while i'm not working. Kind of unfortunate tbh, it's always been one of my dreams.

I attended the first audition camp of a drum corp group and was offered a position on the team. I did not accept because of the high cost, parent disapproval of me being a young female, and summer classes. I was offered a position on the same team the next summer a couple months into the season without auditioning but had to decline because I was already taking summer classes and I still think my parents would have been worried about safety and the cost.

I grew up in a small California town and it was out of the realm of possibility for a majority of us to participate in DCI. The cost and time commitment are the biggest factor given the socioeconomic status of the area. Along with that, the schools there cannot compete financially with big city schools and therefore students often suffer with subpar instruments/resources and lack of educators

My family didn't have a lot of money, the wgi groups I participated in, I had to pay out of pocket and even then struggled to make dues.

Drum corps is expensive as it but adding in being from Canada escalates it a lot. There is only one operational Canadian DCA/DCA ensemble so you probably HAVE to fly to camps then the USD to CAD conversion raises the price of everything by over 25%. If your tuition for the summer is \$4000 USD that's \$5073 CAD.

I was marching and instructing back then. [Corps Name] was only group I wanted to March with while I was marching [Corps Name]. But parents began having second thoughts about the traveling conditions. (This was 1980-81)

Accessibility/Inclusion/Awareness

There were always very few staff members who looked like me, and I was concerned that spending that much time on the road without anyone with lived experiences similar to mine would make me feel uncomfortable if confronted with a situation that people who haven't lived through it can empathize with.

I'm a cymbal player and there just aren't many good groups left at all that have a cymbal line. That's the #1 reason I have not marched.

Got an offer when I was a HS senior but time conflicted with graduation.

My high school marching band wasn't very good, so that combined with being primarily a woodwind player made me feel like there was no reason to consider doing drum corps if I was going to audition alongside people with actual marching and brass experience. Had I known about options that aren't world class I might have gone for it, but the only nearby corps I was aware of before I was too busy with college was [Corps Name] and they are intimidating :)

I didn't do marching band

I never heard of it until after college! But I was too busy with dance outside of school to get involved with band.

Corps/Organization Issues

Oversexualization of women and the horror stories

Someone in my high school band (a year older than me) marched an open class corps after her freshman year of high school. She was 14 and was assaulted by a 17 year old member. When I started getting into DCI and expressed interest in learning an instrument to try out, she warned me not to because of what happened to her (and because of the lack of punishment to the member, who continued on to march other corps)

I marched my entire HS and college career. 90% of the people I met that marched in Drum Corps had a toxic personality and tried to make me feel inferior to them. They would attempt to take over rehearsals from leadership and always chimes in with "In Drum Corps we did it this way".

EXTREMELY poor and last minute planning from corps, expensive flights, lack of time to prepare, personal schedule conflict, COVID worries, (initially) unclear vaccination policies/protocol

*Heard so many horror stories about belittling members who were "bigger" (aka not muscular) and heard several horror stories about sexual assault/grooming/harassment
Staff told me to my face "I don't want to give you a callback, but I know the caption head would be angry if I didn't. So I guess I'll see you at the callback camp.*

From what I heard about marching drum Corp, I didn't think I'd be unsafe more than I thought it would make me uncomfortable to be on bus rides with some of those kids for that long. I also didn't like how cocky some of the people were about how they've marched drum Corp so they are better than everyone else. Like, not my fault I play flute and not my fault I don't want to drop hundreds of dollars every summer before college. I also joined

marching band late (junior year of high school). But my family has always gone to DCI competitions every year so I wasn't a stranger to DCI and I've always enjoyed watching them and sort of wished I could be in it.

I had to make money during the summers, and I did not want to tear my chops up. Also, the people who I knew who had marched drum corps were extremely arrogant about it, despite not being exceptional musicians. DCI basically replaced these people's entire personalities. It was literally the only thing they were capable of talking about to the point where it became difficult to maintain strong friendships with them. In my opinion, DCI often gives people a sense of superiority over others.

*I'd heard horror stories about people's embouchures getting wrecked, and most of the trumpet players I knew during college who marched came back sounding worse and with really dangerous habits. While I was eligible, I was subject to really sexist treatment in undergrad (*while* figuring out and almost immediately suppressing the fact that I'm nonbinary), which when compounded with DCI's reputation as a whole made it pretty likely I wouldn't be safe or able to perform my best if I chose to tour.*

One corps contracted well above the number of spots available and stated they wouldn't know who went on tour until the end of spring training, would've potentially cost thousands to be told to go home AFTER spring training. Tried out somewhere else for the same season, was too far behind in their process. Was a college freshman at this point.

Concerns of instrument related health issues (chops, tendinitis, etc)

Health/Ability/Personal Issues

I have type 1 diabetes

I have severe gastroesophageal reflux disease, which requires a laundry list of foods I can and can't eat. I considered auditioning for a drum major slot once I entered college, but quickly realized that my health concerns paired with my heat intolerance would not be a good fit for the activity.

I do not feel my mental health would allow me to have a successful summer season. BPD + Depression

My mental health was very not good when I was still marching age (like I had to drop my WGI ensemble in the middle of the season bc I was hospitalized for my mental health). Marching drum corps, especially with how a lot of educators at the time approached mental health issues, just was something I couldn't safely do.

I came from a very inwardly competitive college marching setting. In this time, I was made to feel insecure about my abilities by other members in the ensemble. While it was a minority of people I interacted with, it really made me feel as though I could not complete auditions/a season. I then severely injured myself at 21 and became unable to audition, even after building my confidence back.

I don't do well in competitive environments

I genuinely enjoy indoor(WGI) more

When I graduated high school, it continued to be a difficult activity for me to travel and pay for. By the time I was in college, I also felt that I was old and not good enough to participate.

Anything else you would like to add?

The people who DO participate in DCI have a god complex and insanely inflated ego and treat those who have not participated as though they are garbage. Those are often white, rich, males and occasionally some females but that is much more rare. It's disgusting. I think they forget that their privilege is likely what enabled them to play

more than their talent. I'm not saying they don't have talent, but thinking you're the best of the best is incorrect, you're just the best of the rich.

Maybe someday I'd be willing to consult re: gender stuff with corps, but at least right now, I'm pretty solidly in Not At This Time mode. Thank y'all for everything you do! I'm really glad your organization exists.

Thank you for all the work that you do for the marching arts community!! As MAASIN grows, I hope to eventually feel comfortable enough with the activity to actively encourage more of my students to participate or audition for drum corps. Even though we're not there yet, positive growth has already come from your presence as an organization

I've been told I can't participate in DCI because of my diabetes. It's controlled, I use a glucose monitor. But it also creates audible alarms if my blood sugar is low. So, I get it, just kinda sucks. Also told I cannot drink / eat when I need to / only when allowed to

DCI appears to be one of the most well covered up toxic activities in which a person can participate in. It is EXTREMELY restrictive in who can join and it's obvious in who does join - primarily high SES cis-white men and women. I've heard numerous stories about highly inappropriate relationships between staff and members, particularly in [Corps Name] where techs are often engaging in inappropriate relationships and activities with members. Based on what I have been told, it appears as though DCI does not consider mental health to be important. The cost is ridiculous. And nepotism seems to play a LARGE role in who makes a corps, as well as who then gets to teach in a corps. This has been evident at my own university where director involvement influxes the student involvement, but only for the students who were rich, white, and viewed as being "more worthy" to participate in DCI. It was never encouraged for the general band population as a whole. The sense of entitlement that students that participated in DCI had upon returning to their university band program was disgusting and my band in particular has a very band "culture" problem, largely stemming from groups of students who view themselves as better than others — typically from DCI.

I've been one of the few non-binary individuals out participating in WGI Percussion at the World Class level and have so constantly had to advocate for visibility and inclusion I did not see it possible to engage with that on a daily basis for a period of multiple months on tour. Please reach out if you have any questions about how my experiences have better informed local percussion circuits about these issues!