

Meet the Graduate Staff for the 2016 – 2017 Season



Thomas Gamboa is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan. Previous to his studies, he was a conductor for the United States Air Force Band where he was stationed at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia and later Ramstein Air Base, Germany. As an educator, he was the Instrumental Music Director at West Adams Preparatory High School in Inner City Los Angeles. His responsibilities included directing the marching band, wind ensemble, and orchestra. Thomas is also in his 15th year of teaching drum major camps with the United Spirit Association, where he is responsible for developing the conducting curriculum and teaching drum major instructors. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and Bassoon Performance. He later graduated from Northwestern University with a Masters of Music in Wind Conducting studying with Mallory Thompson.



Ashley Howard is a graduate student in the University of Michigan School of Public Health where she is pursuing a Master's of Science in Environmental Health Science. She received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Earth Science with a minor in Music from the University of Michigan. Ashley was a member of the Michigan Marching Band's piccolo section for three years. In addition, she served on the MMB's Business Staff during her senior year. Ashley participated in the campus band program for four years playing flute, alto saxophone, and tenor saxophone. She is also a member of Kappa Kappa Psi and served as the Nu chapter's treasurer for two years.



Liam Jackson is a senior in the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance pursuing a degree in bassoon performance and music education. He has served on the marching band staff of North Farmington High School and Grass Lake High School, in addition to serving as the teaching assistant for the MPulse Bassoon Institute and a clinician for several high school and community bands. Liam is a regular substitute bassoonist and contrabassoonist for the Michigan Philharmonic, and plans on pursuing a graduate degree in bassoon performance following his graduation in 2017.



Originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Darin Martin is a graduate student in the University of Michigan's School of Education, where he is pursuing a Master's of Arts degree in Higher Education Management and Organizations. He completed his undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Performing Arts Management through the University of Michigan's School of Literature, Science & the Arts. Darin was a member of the Michigan Marching Band's tuba section for four years and served as a rank leader during his junior and senior years. In addition, Darin served on the MMB's Business and Library Staff for three years, where he was manager for two. Darin was also a four-year member and three-year manager of the Michigan Basketball Band. In his time with the MMB, Darin assisted Kimberly Baumgartner as a development assistant for the program. Darin is a member of Kappa Kappa Psi and served the Nu chapter as an officer for three years, including one year as chapter president. On a district level of Kappa Kappa Psi, Darin served as a two-year officer of the North Central District, where he served over thirty chapters across six states.



Brandon Smith is in his sixth year at the University of Michigan studying Social Studies Secondary Education. From Saline, MI, Brandon has spent the last five years as a member of the Michigan Drumline in the Michigan Marching Band, serving as Rank Leader for the last two years. Additionally, Brandon has been a member of the Michigan Hockey Band and the Nu Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi.



Nick Smith is a graduate student at the University of Michigan where he is pursuing a Master's Degree in Wind Conducting. Prior to his time at Michigan, Nick served as the Assistant Director and Director of Bands at Hillcrest High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He led performances at the Alabama Music Educator's convention, the Music for All National Concert Band Festival, and the University of Alabama Honor Band Festival, while maintaining consistent "Superior with Distinction" ratings at Alabama's annual Music Performance Assessment with the premier performing ensemble at the school. Additionally, he was named an honorary conductor of the "Children's Palace Band" in Beijing, China, a band which he has conducted on three separate occasions. Nick earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Auburn University in Auburn, AL, where he was also the recipient of the school's "Outstanding Undergraduate Student" award. Nick was recently married (June 2015) to his beautiful bride Courtney, and looks forward to experiencing the next chapter in his life with her in the wonderful Michigan weather!



Elliott Tackitt served as Associate Director of Bands at Northern Arizona University from 2009-2016. His duties included arranging for and directing all athletic bands, the Symphonic Band, instructing undergraduate conducting courses, music education courses, and designed and taught a marching band techniques course. Additionally, Tackitt directed the Curry Summer Music Camp, a three-week music camp servicing musicians grades 7-12. Prior to joining the NAU faculty, Tackitt served as Associate Director of Bands at Flower Mound High School in Flower Mound, Texas. Tackitt earned a Master of Music degree in 2008 in wind conducting from the University of Missouri, Kansas City – Conservatory of Music and Dance, where he studied with Steven Davis. While at UMKC, Tackitt assisted with the instruction of the undergraduate conducting class, conducted the pep band, and aided in the preparation of the Wind Symphony and Wind Ensemble. His duties also included assisting with administrative responsibilities pertaining to the wind band department. He received his undergraduate degree in trombone performance with music education certification from the University of Michigan in 2006.