

Band grad hands down one role, gains another

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Over the past five years, Catherine Wilcoxson hasn't just played trumpet for the [Tulane University Marching Band](#), she's learned what it takes to be a leader. During her time at Tulane, Wilcoxson has marched in the drum line during Mardi Gras parades, performed with the Tulane Jazz Ensemble and, at this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, she accompanied pianist [Jesse McBride](#).



At one of her last university concerts, graduating band member Catherine Wilcoxson performs with the Tulane Concert Band in Dixon Hall on April 24. (Photo by Zack Smith)

Wilcoxson, who is receiving a master's degree in [environmental biology](#) on May 18, credits a marching band scholarship for helping her discover a talent for teaching younger musicians. And as section leader, she's been an essential part of the team, says Barry Spanier, director of bands.

"We expect a lot from our more experienced band members, and Catherine has exceeded our expectations every time," says Spanier, who recently launched a

[marching band endowment](#) to support student awards, uniforms, instruments and travel costs.

Lucky for the band, Wilcoxson won't bid adieu after commencement. She will return to Tulane in August for an essential band camp job: training new recruits and returning members to perform a new season of pregame and halftime shows. She will replace the trumpet instructor who taught her the very same skills, and continue a beloved band tradition of paying it forward.

"It's really important to me to hand the leadership role down to the next generation," says Wilcoxson.

Founded as a military band in 1920, the Tulane University Marching Band of today is on the rise. And that's exactly what attracted Wilcoxson to try out in 2008, much to her mother's delight.

"With my daughter 903 miles away, it's been a comfort to know the band is her family away from home," says Constance Wilcoxson.

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