**“A Cult. Depending on who you were and who you hung out with, these words were the perfect description of marching band, or the last thing on earth you would believe. From the summer of my 8th Grade year to the end of my junior year, my experience of marching band will stay with me forever. It’s hard to describe a tighter-knight group of people. We laughed together, cried together and even bled together. There was hazing, fighting and a plethora of *practical* jokes. Perhaps the most important bit of info here is that I was not only in Marching band…but a member of the drumline. Drumline is the SEAL team 6 of marching band. The guys that take everything way to seriously. I’m talking practicing the same 3 drills all day until your hands start to bleed kind of seriously. Oh, you have a blister? That’s cute, rub some dirt on it and let’s get to work. And when I say guys, I mean guys. Of course, there were girls in drumline…like 2 out of twenty, but that didn’t stop them from being just as tough, malicious and bat-shit crazy as the rest of us. “– Anthony**

**Marching band was a one of a kind experience. Some might try to relate it to a sports team, but with 100+ players. There were people from every background. Black, white, Hispanic, we even had members that were just learning English for the first time (European foreign transfer students). Not only was the group ethnically diverse, but members in the band came from different cliques, there were preppy kids, loners, geeks and people from top of the class. One of the things that I feel made us bond so well together was that everyone was a outcast in some way or form. So when we came together, it was so much more important tot us to have a really strong connection.**

**The purpose of marching is to show spirit that the rest of the school can get behind, fostering loyalism to the school. Imagine a football game without the band. No fight song or alma madre. How loyal would you feel to your school. Providing spirit causes the rest of the school to join with you. Its ironic because a group of outcasts formed a group that fosters other people to also come together.**

**Within the marching band, we were generally split into sections based on instrument. Each section had 1-2 leaders (called section leaders) that were usually seniors and helped teach younger members what to do and how to do it correctly. These section groups created a weird dynamic where everyone was not only loyal to the band as a whole, but also connected to their section (people who played their instrument) in a deeper way. Certain personality types were synonymous with instruments. In general the trumpets were outgoing and obnoxious, the clarinets were soft spoken and studious, and the drumline was hardcore and rowdy.**

**Relational leadership was apparent in section groups because the leader was invested in the decisions they made. If the drum captain decided all of the drumline would run a mile every day before practice to increase physical fitness (which we did), the captain would also have to participate in the action. Furthermore, each member’s voice was heard. Even though the captain had the final say, they would never discount other’s opinions and would instead use other’s opinions to make better decisions for the group.**

**In marching band, I enjoyed most of it. We did a lot; played lots of music, hung out with each other, played pranks on each other, and most importantly, we learned how to bond with one another. Not everyone likes the same thing. I would listen to music with some people I would never play frisbee with and vice versa. Band taught me how to make friends and deal with people that are different than myself. My one regret from marching band is that I was never able to fully embrace it. It was never seen as a “cool” activity and I was never strong enough to ignore what others thought about it. I cared way too much about my own image.**

**Given my experience in marching band, I think it is important my service action proposal is set up in a way that facilitates diverse and critically thinking students. Having a group of diverse students lets everyone learn how to deal with people other than themselves. Furthermore, I’d like to ensure that the service action proposal demands open and inclusive communication lines so that everyone is comfortable sharing their opinion and knowing that it will be heard (just like my experience in marching band).**