

TBDBITL Alumni Club Repudiates OSU Report

Anyone who wants to know the truth about The Ohio State University Marching Band and its director, Jonathan Waters, needs only to read the TBDBITL Alumni Club's Investigative Committee (IC) Report. The 100-page report, with an appendix of several hundred pages, is supported by specific citations to individuals, statements and evidence. It directly addresses the false conclusions contained in the cursory 23-page, unreferenced Investigation Report (IR) prepared by the Office of Compliance and Integrity at The Ohio State University. The TBDBITL IC Report, released Sept. 12 after an investigation of nearly two months, sets the record straight with comprehensive and documented facts. It concludes with a call, once again, for a response and dialogue with the university. Copies were delivered to all appropriate university officials. Now, more than a week later, we have received no response to any of the points in our IC Report. With OSU's IR now discredited, the university's unwillingness to engage immediately in an open and honest dialogue is difficult to understand.

The university's IR is an inaccurate attack on the career and character of Jonathan Waters, an outstanding educator who received exemplary performance reviews from his university superiors, and who generated significant revenue and international acclaim for OSU. The IR is also an attack on the morals and character of the very students the Office of Compliance and Integrity purports to protect, as well as those of generations of Marching Band alumni. In notable contrast, the TBDBITL IC Report establishes that the IR, with its blanket accusations and unfounded generalizations, has itself resulted in a truly hostile environment for band students, alumni and their families. Meanwhile, the university claims that it is committed to the best interest of its students.

The entire Investigative Committee Report of the TBDBITL Alumni Club is available on tbdbitl.com. Our IC Report identifies these deficiencies in the university's report:

- False, inaccurate statements
- Blanket accusations that lack supporting evidence
- Omission of information that would contradict conclusions that therefore appear to have been predetermined
- An unrepresentative, statistically insignificant sample of interviewees, with an emphasis on witnesses recommended by the complainant
- Hearsay and secondhand accounts without direct contact with those involved, resulting in assumptions, speculation and incorrect conclusions
- Non-redacted personally identifying information, including widely known nicknames
- Outdated information that is irrelevant to the IR's supposed 2013-14 scope, coupled with the misleading omission of dates, which hid how much information fell outside that scope
- Unnecessary inclusion of shocking material (much of it outdated or hearsay), apparently to evoke an emotional response

- Presenting incidents as evidence before noting that those incidents had already been dealt with aggressively and appropriately by band staff, or complete omissions of information about such rectifying consequences
- Contradictions stating that Mr. Waters “did nothing,” even though the report itself notes that several of its own examples were banned and no longer occur
- The dubious assertion that a collection of isolated incidents by some individuals constitutes a “culture” of an organization, without wider examination of the actual predominant culture
- The implication that university educators are responsible for unsanctioned behaviors (some of which were directly prohibited) of adult students during unsupervised time
- The absence of Mr. Waters’ defense document, even though the IR references it
- Omissions of Mr. Waters’ other actions to enact positive change
- Sensationalized and biased language
- Unsubstantiated, patronizing characterization of female band members as victims

Moreover, the TBDBITL IC Report describes and documents positive aspects of the Marching Band culture ignored by the IR.

The climate surrounding the preparation and release of the IR includes perceived pressure resulting from a U.S. Department of Education investigation of the university’s Title IX compliance, as well as a history of conflicts within the OSU School of Music. Ironically, those most responsible for the Title IX enforcement deficiencies at the university conducted the investigation of Jonathan Waters and the Marching Band, which was then used as a cornerstone of the university’s defense to investigators.

It has now been two months since the original IR was released: Two months of a culture of fear and silence created by the university administration. Two months of obstinate statements crafted with the same buzzwords. Two months of bland, broken promises and meaningless token gestures. Still, the TBDBITL Alumni Club remains committed to exposing the truth and speaking for our band family. The well-being of current band students and the future of the band are top priority, as are the restoration of the personal and professional reputations of all past and present band members and directors.

Our Honor Defend,

The TBDBITL Alumni Club