



On-Corps is a new concert band that is part of the UTSA Arts community music initiative at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). It is exclusively for veterans, with no prior musical experience required. The purpose of the ensemble is to provide a meaningful artistic challenge for veterans and to foster connection among its members. Learning music at any age, particularly in a group environment, is a fulfilling and valuable experience, and can have a profound effect on a person's health and wellbeing.

This is a pilot project inspired by the New Horizons International Music Association (NHIMA) (<https://newhorizonsmusic.org/>), and mentored by New Horizons' founder, Roy Ernst, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. The UTSA School of Music was eager to cultivate such a program, as fostering lifelong music learning is central to our mission. The idea of starting such an ensemble exclusively for veterans is especially fitting and significant for UTSA, located in Military City USA, and with several veterans among the School of Music faculty and staff.

On-Corps is directed by Major (Ret.) Dean Zarmbinski, former commander of the Air Force Band of the West, and is managed by Airman First Class Dalton Tran, current member of the Air Force Band of the West. The ensemble meets for two hours every Saturday for group lessons and an ensemble rehearsal with UTSA School of Music student and faculty mentors assisting. A coffee break mid-rehearsal provides a vital opportunity for the veterans to build camaraderie. The initial cohort of veterans includes more than 25 members representing several military branches.

The program is provided at no cost to veterans. Philanthropic support, as well as in-kind support from the UTSA School of Music, provides for the cost of instruction, rental instruments, and music. The initial timeframe for the first session was nine weeks; the program began in early October 2022 and concluded on December 10 with a short performance for family and friends. The program will continue in January and welcome new members at that time. More information regarding registration is available at <http://music.utsa.edu/camps>.

This pilot project will provide an opportunity for researchers to study the health outcomes of participation for the ensemble members. UTSA School of Music faculty are reaching out to potential research partners across the university and at other San Antonio institutions.

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