



Drummers for the ECSU Marching Band execute a drum roll during the Homecoming Parade, held Saturday, Oct. 31 in Elizabeth City. The Viking Band has grown 30 percent since 1990. Drummers names, left to right: James Avens, Greg Royster, Edward Grimes, Greg Dockery, Stephen Talley, and James Spain.

On the move and in the groove: ECSU's *Mighty Marching Band*

By Steven C. Cooke

"BAND!" the drum major cried. **"WHAT!"** the band members answered, in unison. **"ATTEN-HUT!"** **"E-C-S-U"**

These words resounded across campus as the mighty Elizabeth City State University Marching Band prepared to head to Roebuck Stadium to perform at the Homecoming game on Oct. 31.

With four shrill whistles and four stick clicks from the drummers, a driving cadence began, and the band marched with fierce intensity to the field.

Led by drum majors Tim Mosley and Al Chandler—and under the direction of Dr. Gary L. Callahan and Assistant Band Director Mr. L. Anthony Johnson—the band performed such songs as "LC's Baby-Baby-Baby," "Never Satisfied" by Good to Go, Michael Jackson's "Thriller," "In The Stone" by Earth Wind and Fire, R. Kelley's "Honey Love" and parts of "They

Want EFX" by rappers Das EFX.

With their characteristic precision marching drills and music, combined with the dazzling flag routines and the vividly choreographed dance routines, the Marching Vikings have performed exciting shows not only at home but at schools such as NC Central, Bowie State, and The University of Kentucky against Central State of Ohio.

Since Callahan's first year here in 1990 the band has increased from 35 members to 102 members in 1992. Not all of the members are music majors, all majors on campus are represented in the band.

Part of the reason for the band's growth lies in the large size of this year's freshman class, said Callahan.

"We've gone from three trumpets to six trumpets to fifteen," Callahan said. The band's larger size allows for "more music and better drill patterns," and "gives a better look and sound," he added.

The larger size of the band makes the band better able to perform when members are out sick, said Callahan. "It's not

as critical when people miss practice," he said.

From a directing standpoint, the larger size makes Callahan's job more difficult since having more members "makes it harder to manage." However Callahan is quick to add, "It's also more exciting."

More members also enhances "the quality of musical performance," according to assistant band director Johnson.

"Adding more upper and middle brass gives more power to the chords in the song," Johnson explained. "The more upper woodwinds gives strength in accenting the string-like parts of the music, and more lower brass gives more flexibility in bass lines patterns. More drummers allows for greater diversity in rhythmic patterns."

Both Callahan and Johnson praise the dedication of band members.

"They work long and hard to make the show the best it can be," said Callahan.

Student band members say the band is not only fun; it also promotes school spirit.

"The band instills a little bit of spirit in

the school," says Jo Ann Johnikins, a junior business major who plays clarinet.

In addition to enhancing the school's image, ECSU's marching band also serves as one of the university's most effective biggest recruitment tools, say Callahan and Johnson.

"This year the band has even greater visibility," said Johnson, "because we have traveled more." This year the band has played at games as far away as Kentucky and Maryland.

Playing in the band isn't easy. Student band members must practice an hour and a half daily five days a week during Marching Band season. They also have night practice from seven to nine p.m.

So why do students do it?

"I got interested in band because I wanted to dance and play," said senior Alec Harding, who plays trumpet for the band.

Harding said he was also attracted to the band's "high-stepping" style of marching. His high school band marched in the "corp" style, he added.