Frequently Asked Questions
Tamburitzans to Become Independent Nonprofit

What is happening?
The Duquesne University Tamburitzans folk music and dance ensemble, known as “The Tammies,” will become an independent, nonprofit organization over the next two to three years, and for the first time will audition students from other universities, as well as Duquesne.

Why is the troupe becoming an independent nonprofit?
The group has experienced a 40 percent drop in applicants over the years. The move to independent status will help increase the ensemble’s applicant pool, allow for a more robust performance schedule—thus more operating revenue—and position the group to more broadly pursue charitable support from individuals, the foundation community and government agencies.

Does the change affect the performance schedule?
No. Performances will continue as scheduled. The troupe is performing at approximately 40 venues this season and is already booking into the 2015-2016 season.

How will the University support the troupe as it transitions to an independent nonprofit?
The University will provide operating fund support throughout the transition as the new nonprofit expands the ensemble, increases its performance schedule and implements a fundraising operation. Duquesne students participating in The Tamburitzans will continue to receive scholarships through more than $4 million endowed scholarship fund. Duquesne is also giving the group more than $2 million in buildings, land, costumes, instruments, vehicles and equipment.

How does this change affect current Tamburitzans?
Current student performers will continue to receive their scholarship package and perform as scheduled.

How does this change affect current Tamburitzan staff?
The Tammies are fortunate to have stability within the current leadership and staff. For the foreseeable future, no changes are expected.

Will student performers receive scholarships after the troupe becomes independent?
Yes. Duquesne University will continue to provide endowed scholarships to Tamburitzan performers who are Duquesne students. When the new nonprofit is formed, the University will continue providing scholarships for Duquesne students through a more than $4 million endowed scholarship fund.

Who will lead the transition?
Robert Vukic, a former Tamburitzan, will lead the transition with the help of a volunteer committee called the Tamburitzans Executive Council (TEC). The TEC has been formed to ensure the timely formation of the non-profit 501c3 corporation as well as provide support to every phase of the transition effort. A key responsibility of the TEC will be to secure funding for the new organization as well as develop new revenue streams to ensure long-term financial viability for the Tammies.

Who will lead the new organization once nonprofit status is granted?
After nonprofit status is granted by the IRS, an executive director and a board of directors will lead the organization.

How many students are currently in the troupe?
This year’s troupe has 28 performers.

When did the Tammies begin?
The Tammies association with Duquesne University began in 1937, when Dr. A. Lester Pierce accepted a faculty appointment at Duquesne, bringing with him a musical variety show, “American Tamburitza String Orchestra.” After accepting the position at Duquesne, Pierce made a permanent home for the ensemble and secured a work-scholarship agreement with the University. Shortly thereafter, the troupe, by then called “Slavonic Tamburitza Orchestra,” became known as the “Duquesne University Tamburitzans.”

How many Tammie alumni are there?
There are approximately 600 Tamburitzans alumni.