

M NARET

THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA'S STUDENT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1933



Feature

The Tale of Tiktok's
Tampa Terrence

Surviving Helene, Bracing for Milton

Hardships, Heroes, and Hope Amid the
Hurricanes

CONTENTS

ISSUE 1 | FA 2024 | HURRICANE EDITION | THEMINARETONLINE.COM

NEWS

04/ Feeding Tampa Bay Helped the Community After Back-To-Back Hurricanes

SPORTS

05/ Rays Still Searching for a Place to Play After Hurricane Milton



Photo Courtesy of Cliff Carithers

CAMPUS LIFE

07/ The Hurricanes' Impact on Students Survey

08-09/ Urso Hall vs. Hurricane Milton

10/ UTampa Implements Weekend Classes After Hurricanes Disrupt Semester: What Students and Faculty Think

11/ Spartan Pride Reclaims Campus for December Commencement

11/ Unsheltered Homeless People Spent the Night Outside During Hurricane Milton



Hurricane Milton Damage



Photo Courtesy of Kiley Petracek

FEATURE

14-15/ The Tale of Tiktok's Tampa Terrance

16-17/ Riding Out The Storm: A Students Experience Through Hurricane Milton



Cover photo by:

Photo by NASA

Design by Cassandra Carithers

MEET THE TEAM

2024-2025 EDITORIAL STAFF



Want To Advertise With The Minaret?

Contact us at
ana.ortiz@spartans.ut.edu

Address

401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Box P
Tampa, FL 33606

Office

Vaughn Center 211
Phone: (813) 257-3636

Online

Website: theminaretonline.com
Email: ana.ortiz@spartans.ut.edu
Instagram: @theminaret

Editor-in-Chief Kiley Petracek
Managing Editor Shane Petagna
Business Director Aimee Kanaskie

Head Copy Editor Anika Schmid
News Editor Leah Burdick
A&E Editor Alyssa Cortes
Opinion Editor Nayria Figueroa Colon
Sports Editor Emily McLaughlin
Campus Life Editor Steve Ifantis
Feature Editor Franchesca Murrugarra

Graphic Designer Cassandra Carithers
Graphic Designer Audrey Rey
Photographer Mariam Bernardini-Herrera
Photographer Lexi Smith
Illustrator Naisha Lalwani

Marketing Manager Ana Ortiz
Social Media Director Jilian Geer

Faculty Advisor Sohana Nasrin

Feeding Tampa Bay Helped the Community After Back-To-Back Hurricanes

By Leah Burdick

Feeding Tampa Bay (FTB) provides food assistance for 10 counties in Florida and has been involved with recovery efforts for the recent hurricanes.

Florida was hit by Hurricane Helene and then Hurricane Milton a little over a week apart.

Resources were in need after Helene brought an intense and record-breaking storm surge.

At the distribution sites, they provided meals and other resources such as FEMA support.

An ABC article said FTB provided 1.2 million meals after Helene.

Before the community could fully recover, Hurricane Milton came across with heavy rain and strong winds, causing further damage to residents' homes.

Most people were out of power for a week, and some still had no home to return to from Helene.

FTB was back out, ready to help the community once again with these resources.

"During storm response we've been supplying about 400,000 meals a day"

Thomas Mantz, president and CEO of Feeding Tampa Bay, said seeing people lose everything and knowing that this organization can help makes it special.

"When there is water damage, power out, and other compromising conditions for families that we serve, we are the first 24 to 72 hours after a storm providing water and meals ready to eat, something you can consume without power," said Mantz.

He said they supply other items such as diapers, cleaning supplies, pet food and other emergency needs during those 72

hours after the storm.

When power is restored they help restock pantries to help with the loss of meals they bought.

"Back-to-back storms are really tough. We're on average supply about 200,000 meals a day into our community. During storm response we've been supplying about 400,000 meals a day," said Mantz.

Mantz said they start getting trucks ready with supplies the day before, so they can immediately respond.

The organization works with law enforcement, emergency service providers, other nonprofit organizations, elected officials, and county officials to make sure they can get to the damaged communities.

"We had about 4,600 volunteers helped us during the disaster relief efforts. That's about a two-and-a-half to three-week period," said Mantz.

Professor of anthropology David Himmelgreen, from the University of South Florida, has been involved with FTB since 2013. He is now a board member and has connected the university with the organization.

USF and FTB have been working together since 2015 on ways to find solutions to hunger.

Himmelgreen said FTB and its partners have done a phenomenal job in providing food and other resources for those after Helene and Milton.

"Feeding Tampa Bay has the expertise in disaster preparation and relief, a highly motivated and dedicated team, and a new facility that is designed for these emergency situations," said Himmelgreen.

He said his favorite part about this organization is the selfless people who help FTB end hunger in Tampa Bay.

"USF conducted a study on the impact of a Food Rx program that was in collaboration between FTB and Evara Health. The results showed several positive outcomes of the program," he said.

FTB is involved with school pantries for public schools and universities, nutrition education, and job training programs.

"Students should definitely volunteer at Feeding Tampa Bay. There are many opportunities including

ones for college students," said Himmelgreen.

USF isn't the only university in Tampa that works closely with FTB. The University of Tampa has also been affiliated with this organization for a few years.

Chiara Brown is the public relations director for the PEACE organization at UTampa.

She said the campus organization went out after the hurricanes to help prepare and distribute to the



Photo Courtesy of Feeding Tampa Bay

communities in need.

When school resumed after Milton, Brown said PEACE was collecting donations for FTB, and it was successful.

"We have a close affiliation with Feeding Tampa Bay. They were super grateful we have this organization and loved that we were trying to help any way we could," said Brown.

Brown said that they send people to the FTB warehouse and the Trinity Cafe that the organization owns. "It's really cool to see all the food donated going to the cafe which is like a full circle," she said.

To get involved with future volunteer events with FTB through UTampa, students can go to [InvolveUT](#) and stay up to date on their Instagram page [@peace_volunteercenter](#).

To help volunteer directly with FTB, students and residents in Tampa Bay can volunteer through their portal.



Staff Spotlight

Leah Burdick | News Editor

Leah Burdick is one of the finest reporters the UTampa journalism department has to offer. Entering her senior year with a clear vision of where she wants to head post-grad, *The Minaret* is lucky to have a reporter as enthusiastic as Leah on our team.

As News Editor, she has pioneered *The Minaret's* first ever live reporting stories on our website ([theminaretonline.org](#)). During hurricanes, tropical storms, and local updates, Leah hops on the news and wants to be the voice the community turns to in those chaotic times of need.

As a leader, Leah has assisted reporters in breaking out of their shell and finding sources to create the most well-reported stories the News Section has seen in quite a while. We are honored to have a talented and eager leader and someone who is a journalist down to bone contributing to the team.

Without Leah, *The Minaret*, and the News Section especially, would not be where it is at this point in the year. We admire you Leah, thank you for everything!

Photo Courtesy of Mariam Bernardini

**"It could cost
somewhere north
of **\$100 million** to
build a new roof"**

Drone footage of Tropicana Field in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton on Oct. 14.
Photo courtesy of Clifford Carithers.

Rays Still Searching for a Place to Play After Hurricane Milton

By Shane Petagna

As Major League Baseball (MLB) now shifts its focus to the offseason, where the Tampa Bay Rays will play in 2025 will be just as big a question as any potential free agent signing.

Hurricane Milton destroyed the fiberglass roof of Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Florida, as winds reached up to 106 miles per hour on Oct. 10. No one was injured inside. But, the stadium was used as a staging area for first responders before the hurricane made landfall.

Even with the St. Petersburg City Council approving nearly \$6.5 million on Thursday, Oct. 31, to clean the debris scattered across all parts of the stadium and repair the damage, it appears unlikely that the Rays will be able to host the Colorado Rockies on Opening Day for the 2025 season on March 27, 2025, at the stadium they've called home since 1998.

In the first stages of the Rays recovery process, engineers have been brought in to assess the damages. Team staff have been working remotely since to come up with a contingency plan.

There are obstacles in the way of a repair. It could cost somewhere north of \$100 million to build a new roof, which is not seen as a great investment considering the Rays are set to break ground on their new stadium in January that is supposed to be ready to go for the start of the 2028 season.

The Rays could attempt to make Tropicana Field an open-air stadium, as there are over a dozen farm teams that bear the elements of a Floridian summer during the course of their seasons. However, the constant threat of rainstorms wouldn't be ideal as there isn't a drainage system in place at the stadium, and it appears to be nearly impossible to construct.

St. Petersburg's approval allocates up to \$2.5 million for construction and waterproofing, while \$3.9 million will go towards remediation service.

However, council members explained that clarity is needed on the structural integrity of the stadium to determine if repairs would become unrealistic based on the set budget.

One sporting event has already officially been changed in the wake of Hurricane Milton. The Savannah Bananas announced Thursday they will be holding a one-night-only special event on March 15, 2025, at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa instead of hosting two games at Tropicana Field on March 15-16 as originally planned for their 2025 Banana Ball World Tour.

With the lack of hope for the Tropicana, the Rays and MLB are reportedly looking into spring training sites across the Sunshine State to serve as a temporary home. MLB commissioner Rob Manfred wants the team to stay local to its fan base in Florida, and the Tampa Bay region has plenty of facilities that major league teams could use to prepare for upcoming seasons.

"The only way that happens is if it's such a bad deal for the Rays"

"We're hopeful that we can figure out something in [the Tampa Bay area] for them and that the repairs can be done in a way that allows them to resume playing," said Manfred on an episode of The Varsity podcast published Oct. 20. "The easiest thing is always to stay in the market where the clubs are anchored if we can manage it."

Marc Topkin of the Tampa Bay Times speculates use of the Philadelphia Phillies BayCare Ballpark

in Clearwater or the New York Yankees George M. Steinbrenner Field is the most likely option.

"The only way that happens is if it's such a bad deal for the Rays," said Rays second baseman Brandon Lowe on playing at the Yankees spring training facility on the Foul Territory podcast. "Why would you? In division, all that — you wouldn't make it easy. I'm not just gonna hand my stadium over to you, and they have a team that plays there during the summer."

The ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, where the Atlanta Braves previously held spring training, is also available. The Rays previously used the facility in the spring of 2023, when their complex in Port Charlotte was not ready after damage sustained from Hurricane Ian. However, choosing central Florida as a temporary home would require relocating players and staff 90 miles away from Tampa Bay.

No matter what solution is reached, the near future will be difficult.

In American sports history, the only recent equivalent to the severe and unexpected damage to Tropicana Field would be the December 2010 collapse of the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome roof in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The roof was rebuilt for the 2011 season, but the Minnesota Vikings of the National Football League (NFL) leveraged the incident for a joint effort between the team, city, and state to build a new stadium.

The Vikings continued to play their home games at the Metrodome through the end of the 2013 season, then playing outdoors at the University of Minnesota once the stadium was demolished until their current home of U.S. Bank Stadium was complete. U.S. Bank Stadium was built on the same lot as the Metrodome and took a little over two years to be finished.



The Hurricanes' *Impact* on Students

The Hurricanes' Impact on Students

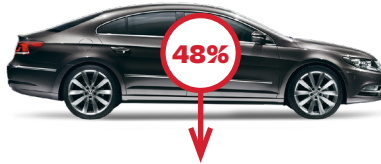
The recent hurricanes had a widespread impact on students, from costly evacuations and power outages to setbacks in coursework. Many felt UTampa's support could have been stronger, while social media served as the main source for storm updates. Data collected by The Minaret's marketing team from a survey of 40 students highlighted these experiences.

Did you evacuate for the hurricane?

If so, how?



Yes, I got a flight



Yes, I drove



No, I stayed

Results: 8% chose not to answer or had no clear choice

Did the hurricane impact your fall semester?

If so, how?

62%

Yes, Behind on assignments

8%

Yes, missing campus life

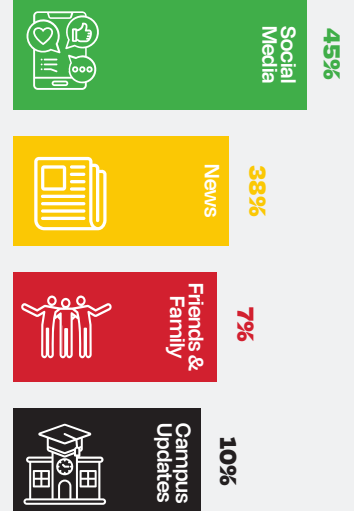
15%

Not much impact

15%

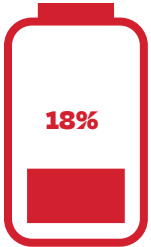
No impact

What was your top source for staying updated during the storm?

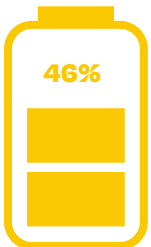


Did you lose power?

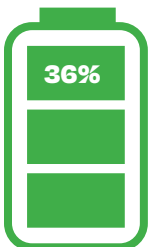
If so, for how long?



Yes, for a week



Yes, for days

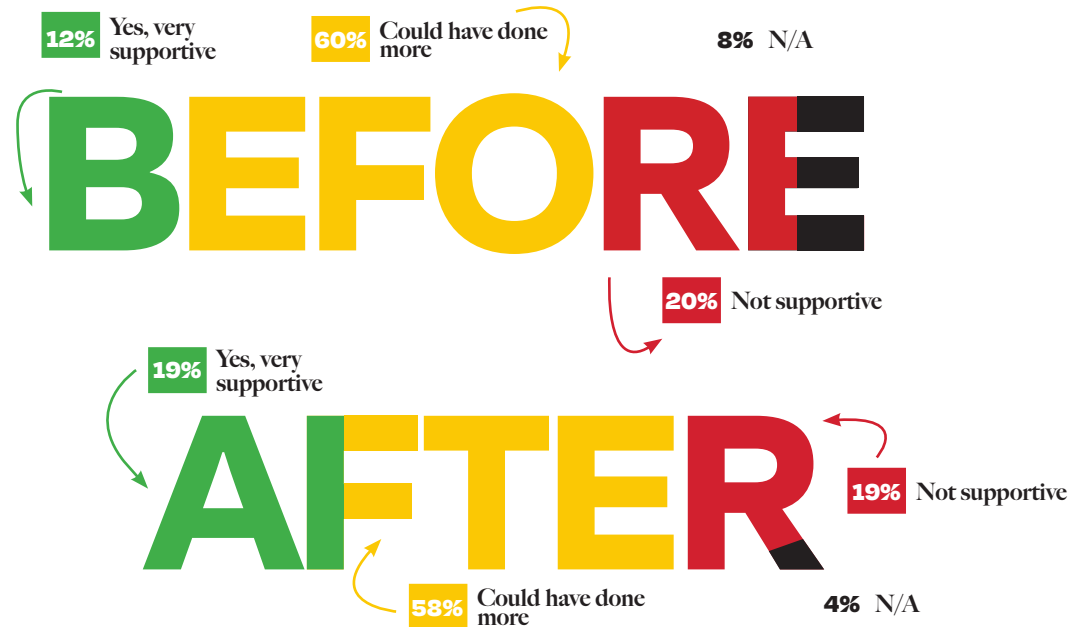


No, Never lost power

Did UTampa provide enough support during the hurricane?

If so, was it more helpful before or after the storm?

Insight: Most students felt the university could have done more to support them before the hurricane.





All photo courtesy of Mariam Bernardini-Herrera

Urso Hall vs. Hurricane Milton

By Isabella May

After Hurricane Helene, the students at The University of Tampa thought their school routine and academics would return to normal. However, less than a week and a half later, Florida was struck by Hurricane Milton. This caused students to flee campus in just a matter of hours and get to a safe destination away from the storm. After a week away from campus, all students were welcome back to a safe campus and ready to move forward with our year. Well, that was not the case for all students living on campus.

Urso vs. Milton

The Urso Hall dorm building is across the street from Vaughn Center at UTampa. While everyone was welcome back to campus and their dorms, those students were not.

Marissa Johnson, a student at UTampa, said the University sent out an email to all Urso Hall residents saying, “Because electricity had not been restored upon return to school, we’d be unable to stay in our rooms until they could fix it.” They were allowed to visit their dorms for a few moments that Sunday to pack clothes and school supplies and check for any damages from the storm.

Aeryn Mike, sophomore Urso Hall resident, said that the University told them “that I would have to stay off campus or live in Barrymore until power returned.”

The question running through everyone’s minds was, “How is this fair?”

Looking for a place to stay

While the Urso Hall dorms were closed, students were frantically trying to find a place to stay by

asking friends and trying to find hotels that did not cost too much. While this was a stressful time, the University did help with this problem.

Johnson spoke out on how the school helped students who had nowhere to go by holding them up in the Barrymore — a hotel that is about a 10-minute walk from campus — until Urso Hall was reopened: “This meant that everyone was paired with roommates, even those that paid for single rooms at the start of the year.”

“It affected my school week because I could not access the books in my dorm and was extremely stressed that I would fall behind on work”

“I stayed with my friend in Palm,” said Mike.

“I stayed in the Barrymore during the time of closure,” said Angie Rodriguez, sophomore and Urso Hall resident.

While the school did give the option for students to stay in the Barrymore, was it right to still start school while some students had nowhere to go?

How did this affect the students at the University?

“This change affected my week quite a bit,” said Johnson. “Because we weren’t allowed to return to our rooms at all, any items forgotten were unavailable for that foreseeable future.”

She also discussed the issue with meal plans after the hurricane: “Quite a few Urso students, including myself, use Urso’s exclusive seven-meals-a-week meal plan, as Urso has kitchens. This meant that many students had to purchase additional meals that week.” This was obviously something students were unprepared to do, adding additional stress to an already stressful week.

“It affected my school week because I could not access the books in my dorm and was extremely stressed that I would fall behind on work,” said Mike.

It seemed that the main catalyst for the students’ stress was the lack of materials needed to return back to school and be a student during that week. Not only were living conditions difficult, but transportation to and from campus was also extremely exhausting.

“Instead of simply crossing the street to get to class, I walked about 20 minutes from the Barrymore to get to my classes which was extremely inconvenient,” said Rodriguez.

Due to all these setbacks and adjustments, should the University have opened when they did, or should they have waited to ensure that all students would be able to be let back into their dorms and continue their academic year with fewer hiccups than they had?



UTampa Implements Weekend Classes After Hurricanes Disrupt Semester: What Students and Faculty Think

By Ariana Fromm

After two major hurricanes disrupted class schedules, The University of Tampa introduced Saturday makeup classes to meet accreditation requirements. However, students and faculty have mixed feelings about the situation.

UTampa recently announced that starting on Oct. 19, weekend classes will be held on Saturdays and one Sunday for the remainder of the semester to make up for missed class time caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. These hurricanes led to a total of eight class days missed, forcing the University to find a solution to make sure students meet the required hours for their classes.

When Hurricane Helene struck as a Category 4, students evacuated days in advance, missing a full week of classes. Shortly after students returned, Hurricane Milton hit as a Category 3, leading to another evacuation and further disruption. With limited time to make up for lost instructional days, the administration decided that Saturday classes

heavily, and we know every year that. For every single year of my college experience here, we have evacuated for a hurricane and lost school time," said Wappelhorst. "So they know this is going to happen. So why do we not have days built into our school year?"

Professor Ryan Cragun, UTampa Faculty Senate president, said that throughout his time working at the University, the school has never done something like this because of a hurricane because not many

we had to come up with a way to make up for those missed hours."

Meredith Elzy, a psychology professor, said that even though the faculty understands the problems that were created for students in the past few weeks but is appreciative to UTampa for finding a way to move forward.

"I am grateful to our UTampa leaders for providing us with a flexible approach to make up missed content so that we can accommodate as

"I think Saturday classes are not the best option. I think that it is unfeasible for some students. Like some people work and can't go to class on Saturday"

"My hope would be that students, faculty, and administrators rally together rather than looking to place blame. At the end of the day, our success is all intertwined."

were the most feasible way to keep the semester on track.

For many students, however, Saturday classes are less than ideal. Olivia Wappelhorst, senior allied health major, expressed her anger with the decision. She said it's not the best choice because it isn't realistic for many people.

"I think Saturday classes are not the best option. I think that it is unfeasible for some students. Like some people work and can't go to class on Saturday," said Wappelhorst.

Molly Baker, senior political science major, suggested other ways UTampa could accommodate for missed days.

"Extending the academic calendar like a few days into winter break. Or I see the appeal of offering online classes," said Baker.

Students also pointed out that living in a hurricane-prone region, the University could anticipate and prepare in advance. Wappelhorst reflected on her time at UTampa, noting her experience with hurricanes every year.

"We live in an area where hurricanes are prevalent

classes were missed. Therefore, nothing had to be done to make up class time.

"In my time at UT — I started in 2007 — we've only ever had to cancel classes for one hurricane. That typically has resulted in far fewer canceled classes," said Cragun. "As a result, we have not had to implement such a makeup strategy during my time here at UT."

Cragun said that weekend classes were necessary to get back all the hours that were missed and to keep the school's accreditation according to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

"UT introduced Saturday and Sunday makeup classes because our accrediting body, SACSCOC, requires that students have a specific number of contact hours in order to earn credit hours," said Cragun. "Because we had two hurricanes that resulted in the cancellation of a total of eight days of classes, we are at risk of not meeting the requirements of our accrediting body in providing sufficient contact hours for students. As a result,

many of these challenges as possible while still upholding the value of our courses," said Elzy.

Patrick O'Brien, a history professor, said that he understands the students' frustrations because the faculty feel it as well because there are outside priorities like jobs, religious obligations, or just plans that were made.

However, students need to know that making up lost hours is important to the "universities accreditation, and thus, to the value of students' degrees when they graduate," said O'Brien.

"The administration had to make a tough call to solve a difficult problem, but they did so with the students' best interests at heart," said O'Brien. "My hope would be that students, faculty, and administrators rally together rather than looking to place blame. At the end of the day, our success is all intertwined."



Photo courtesy of The Beck Group

Spartan Pride Reclaims Campus for December Commencement

By Steve Ifantis

Because Florida has weathered so many hurricanes this season, unfortunately, The University of Tampa has had to change its plans regarding December's commencement. Originally scheduled to take place at the Florida State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, it has now been moved onto UTampa's campus in the Martinez Athletics Center since that venue is no longer available due to some structural damage from Hurricane Milton. Though this change in events may be entirely unexpected, the meaningful twist will have UTampa pride in recognition as a way to celebrate the graduates right at the heart of campus, revisiting this dear tradition with Spartan pride.

Embracing an Unforeseen Test of Tradition and Pride

The Bob Martinez Athletics Center, steeped in tradition on campus and a well of memorable moments for Spartan alums, hosts December's ceremony, as it has for years before burgeoning attendance prompted the University to seek more spacious venues.

Robin Roup, associate director of orientation and family engagement, said Martinez Athletics Center is "a space familiar to many alumni and rich in Spartan pride," adding, "while an unplanned return to campus, this backward glance will be a nostalgic and very fitting tribute to the class of 2024."

This on-campus move will allow the University to continue to honor an essential tradition in a setting of intimacy and smallness that most alumni report looking back with fondness.

"The Martinez Center's association with campus tradition will add to the ceremony ambiance, although it differs in capacity and scale from the Expo Hall," Roup said.

Therefore, with this change, the University wants to make December's commencement a memorable experience that marries the familiar with the excitement of new beginnings.

A Worthwhile Celebration for All Graduates and Their Guests

Although the venue change requires some modifications, the University is dedicated to preserving a proper commencement experience. Since the Martinez Center had a much smaller capacity than the spacious Expo Hall, which could hold as many as 7,800 guests, the graduating class had to be divided into two ceremonies.

Graduates from the College of Arts and Letters and the Sykes College of Business will take to the stage during a morning ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Graduates from the College of Natural and Health Sciences and the College of Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Education will attend the

afternoon ceremony at 1 p.m.

"This approach, dividing the ceremonies by college, allows us to preserve the quality of the experience and ensure that every graduate's family can participate," Roup said.

Families are being asked to limit their guest count to eight per graduate so there is adequate seating for everyone without needing to ticket the event. This move reflects UTampa's commitment to making the experience inclusive: bringing graduates and their loved ones together without restriction.

Bringing the Spirit of the Fairgrounds to Campus

Although the Expo Hall in the Fairgrounds allowed larger venues, the University is thoughtfully adapting the Martinez Athletics Center to replicate the traditional commencement format. It will include stadium seating, ADA accommodations, and a stage layout similar to past ceremonies. It will create an atmosphere honoring the spirit of the Fairgrounds while infusing it with the spirit of Spartan pride.

"The decor and atmosphere will closely mirror what we've established at the Expo Hall, but the Martinez Center brings a singularly Spartan flavor to the event," Roup said.

Campus Safety is collaborating with UTampa staff to ensure security protocols are consistent with what was previously provided at the Fairgrounds. Graduates who registered for commencement will be contacted via UTampa's weekly communications. It will also be live streamed on the UTampa website for those loved ones who cannot attend. This combination of tradition and new precautions shows the agility of the University in providing an inclusive celebration.

Smooth Transition of Students and Families

The University also understands that a transition of this magnitude will create numerous questions, and the Office of Orientation and Family Engagement is prepared to address concerns that students and their family members may have.

"Our team is here to answer questions and address any issues. We understand this is a major milestone, and our goal is to make it as smooth and memorable as possible," Roup added, echoing the University's commitment to student satisfaction and support.

In addition to the regular updates and guidance, UTampa has mobilized a team of cross-departmental staff with vast experience in event planning. Many staff members were involved in the December commencement ceremonies held in the Martinez Athletics Center from 2006 to 2016, bringing valuable insight and expertise to this year's preparations. That commitment means December's event will be a meaningful, well-coordinated celebration embracing tradition and the UT community's resilience.

Looking Ahead to Future Commencements

As UT plans for December's on-campus ceremony, the University administration is considering its choices for future venues. Outdoor ceremonies could be possible; however, Florida's unpredictable weather creates significant challenges, making indoor venues like the Fairgrounds safer for hosting significant events.

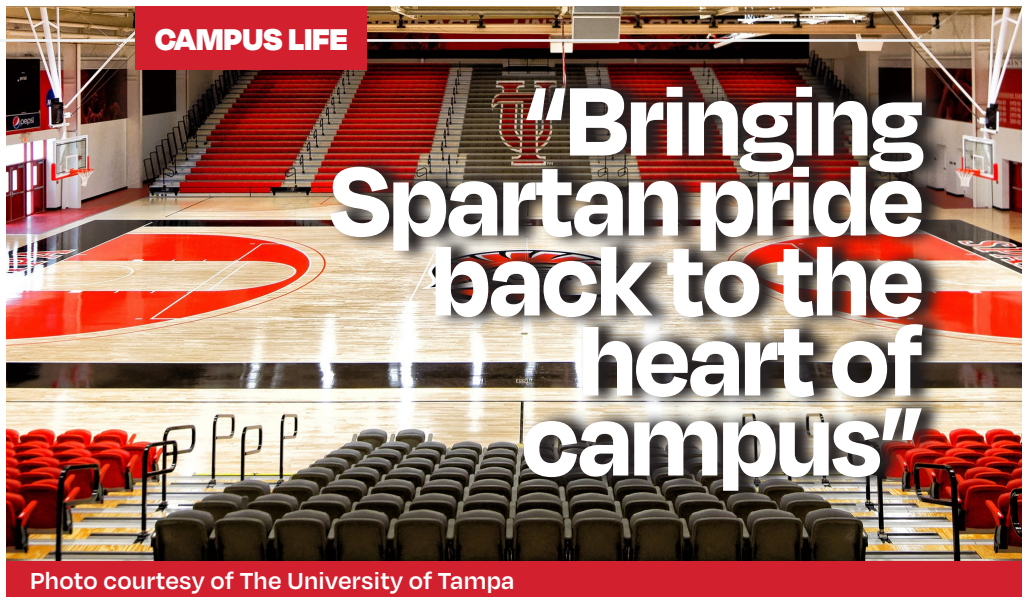
"The heat, unpredictability of weather, and logistical complexities of outdoor events have historically made indoor options more viable," Roup said, noting other local institutions rely on indoor venues to ensure safe and comfortable ceremonies.

The University continues to monitor the repair timeline for the Expo Hall at the Fairgrounds. It expects to announce the location and details for the May 2025 commencement by early February. This provides the University with ongoing ways of banning tradition and practicality while planning future ceremonies.

Celebration of Achievement at the Heart of Campus

With the graduates destined to take to the stage on Friday, Dec. 13, heading back onto campus carries more than just a venue change; it is a homecoming to the place where students spent their school lives. By relocating the ceremony to the Martinez Athletics Center, UTampa has transformed a challenge into an opportunity to celebrate Spartan pride and tradition.

For more information about the December 2024 commencement, please visit utampa.edu/commencement or contact the Office of Orientation and Family Engagement at commencement@ut.edu.



CAMPUS LIFE

"Bringing Spartan pride back to the heart of campus"

Photo courtesy of The University of Tampa



“If it hadn’t been for that bridge, I probably would’ve been **dead today”**

The bridge that Avent slept under during Hurricane Milton on North Nebraska Avenue.
Photo courtesy of Faith Montalvo.

Unsheltered Homeless People Spent the Night Outside During Hurricane Milton

By Faith Montalvo

As emergency shelters opened during Hurricane Milton, not everyone experiencing homelessness in Tampa knew about the storm, had access to shelter, or even felt that they could be safe inside of one. This resulted in some homeless people having to ride out the storm under bridges and in parking garages.

Approximately 31,462 people are experiencing homelessness in Florida, according to Florida’s Council on Homelessness. Over half of these people are unsheltered.

There are also about 5,422 homeless people throughout Hillsborough, Pinellas, Lee, and Sarasota counties, where Hurricane Milton hit the hardest.

Walter Avent, a homeless person in Downtown Tampa, stayed under a bridge on North Nebraska Avenue as Hurricane Milton made landfall.

“It was the most terrible thing I went through in my life,” Avent said, crying as he spoke. “I thank God that I got through it.”

Avent, 53, said he was unaware of any news of the hurricane until he saw that stores were closed on Oct. 9 — the same day that Hurricane Milton arrived. He saw signs on buildings that said they were closed due to the storm, and the buses were not running.

Avent did not have a phone or access to the news. Even as police drove by and checked on him, he said he didn’t realize how intense the hurricane would be that night.

As the wind picked up around 8 p.m., Avent said he thought he was going to die.

“During this time, I’m on my hands and knees, crying and praying,” he said.

Throughout the night, he witnessed debris sliding along the road and wirelines snapping. He said he was afraid of the broken wirelines electrocuting him.

“If it hadn’t been for that bridge, I probably would’ve been dead today,” said Avent.



The Waterview Parking Garage, where Amato and his friend slept during Hurricane Milton.
Photo courtesy of Faith Montalvo

Mikka Patterson, a volunteer at a soup kitchen that provides one daily meal to those in need, said that the hurricane disrupted some homeless people’s daily routines.

She said the Faith Cafe, a consistent food source serving between 70 to 90 meals daily, was closed for three days because of the hurricane.

“That really put a big impact on them because we were their source of food,” Patterson, 43, said. “We were their source of nourishment.”

While Patterson said that many people she serves were able to take buses to shelters, others decided to

weather the storm.

Patterson said that people experiencing homelessness find shelters to be dangerous, and it may even be triggering for those recovering from substance abuse if they run into the wrong people.

“Something like a hurricane can take the whole sobriety away just from going to a shelter,” She said. “So they do get stubborn, and they do decide to shelter in a parking lot, or in a park or anywhere they can feel that they’re a little bit covered up.”

Thomas Amato, a 68-year-old man experiencing homelessness in Downtown Tampa, said he and his friend trudged through knee-high water on West Platt Street and Kennedy Boulevard. They came to the Waterview Parking Garage in Midtown Tampa and slept on the cement ground for the night.

“I was so wet and shivering,” Amato said, “We were soaked to the skin.”

Amato said all his belongings were soaked from the storm, and it wasn’t until the next day that he could dry his clothes in the sun.

Meanwhile, Luis Mirabel, 45, stayed in a crowded shelter. He said a security guard from the bus terminal told him that he could go to Middleton High School during the hurricane. When it opened as a shelter, he went with all his belongings.

“I was just waiting to see what was gonna be the outcome of everything, and trying to make the best of it,” Mirabel said.

Mirabel said that he is always worried about not receiving assistance, including the shelter, from the hurricane because it is often limited.

“We don’t know what to expect from the city to know what kind of help they’ll offer for us homeless people,” he said.

Scott Ferguson, a 60-year-old man experiencing homelessness, said he received text alerts from the county on his phone about the hurricane.



Photos courtesy of Emily McLaughlin



Photos courtesy of Leah Burdick and Audrey Rey



Photos courtesy of Leah Burdick



Photos courtesy of Jaden Workman



Photos courtesy of Leah Burdick

The Tale of Tiktok's Tampa Terrence

By Kiley Petracek



Photo courtesy of Tampa Terrence

Walking home from campus in Downtown Tampa alongside the Hillsborough River as it empties into the Tampa Bay, Terrence crossed paths with a man waving for help as his boat began to get swept under the Platt Street Bridge. The man was trying to capture the attention of other boaters, but nobody was stopping. Terrence decided to intervene after realizing he had seen the man a few times prior in the same area.

They dragged the boat to the same dock where the man would later sit through two hurricanes and where he became an overnight internet celebrity tending to the nickname “Lieutenant Dan.”

Terrence Concannon, otherwise known as “Tampa Terrence” on TikTok, grew a large following on TikTok over the 2024 hurricane season, partly because of his assistance with Lieutenant Dan, or Joe Malinowski.

“The Lieutenant Dan stuff is crazy, that whole story is. You could write like a hundred stories just on that,” Terrence said.

“I haven’t profited anyway off Dan... I want what’s best for him,”

Terrence decided to nickname himself Tampa Terrence a few months into beginning his TikTok account. He wasn’t originally from the Tampa area, but moved from Massachusetts before his sophomore year at The University of Tampa, where he is currently a communication and media studies major.

“At first, I was just posting random videos,” Terrence said. He began posting consistently on TikTok in October 2023, but it was never something that was taken too seriously. “I never really put too much thought into them, I’d just film them on Snapchat and just kind of throw them up there. They seem to do pretty well.”

He grossed 30 thousand followers by the beginning of September 2024, nearly a year after starting. Some of his earlier videos include walking 6 miles home from the Tampa International Airport, unreasonable covers at local bars, or paddleboarding to class.

During his tenure at school in Tampa, he experienced Hurricane Ian in 2022, Hurricane Idalia in 2023, and most recently Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Terrence decided to stay at home during

Hurricane Helene. “I told him right away, as soon as I heard,” he said. Terrence then made the first video of what was soon to be known as Dan. “He’s not leaving, baby! Don’t give up the ship!” he said.

The name Lieutenant Dan was inspired by Forrest Gump’s Lieutenant Dan Taylor: “Forrest Gump is one of my favorite movies. He has one leg, the guy in the movie has no legs.”

After the first video succeeded 2 million views, Terrence posted two other videos about Dan on the day Hurricane Helene hit, accumulating another 12.7 million views combined. The comment section was filled with concern for Dan in any unrelated video Terrence posted after that.

Terrence soon began a GoFundMe under his friend’s bank account, so it didn’t appear that he was pocketing the money after encouragement from his TikTok viewers. Since Dan didn’t have access to his bank account due to an alleged invalid ID, the plan was to withdraw the gained funds as cash and hand it to Dan. The initial GoFundMe was set to raise \$25,000 to help Dan buy a new boat and obtain a mode of transportation when on land.

As the GoFundMe verification period took five days, Hurricane Milton began picking up speed in the Gulf of Mexico, with Tampa being the central target. By the beginning of October, Terrence had accumulated 80 thousand TikTok followers.

“Dan is not leaving the boat for the hurricane. He is staying on that boat,” Terrence said in a TikTok video on Oct. 9. “There has been many attempts to get him off this boat. People have offered houses, hotel rooms, apartments. He will not leave.”

As the news of Hurricane Milton captured the nation’s attention, his comments were filled with concern from across the globe. “Now I won’t sleep...Dan is stressing me and [I] am in South Africa,” TikTok user @sihlembambo2 commented.

Terrence offered a hotel for Dan near the airport, but Dan was set on staying aboard his ship. Dan also gained attention for his stubbornness from locals such as Jane Castor — Tampa’s mayor — and the Tampa Police Department. Others were coming up to him and asking about Terrence’s GoFundMe.

“I haven’t profited anyway off Dan. ... I want what’s best for him,” Terrence said in the same TikTok. “Honestly, all we can do is pray for him at this point.”

Terrence’s following extended to 8 hundred thousand within just a few short weeks.

“Everything was just blowing up [during Milton]. I could’ve posted a video of grass and be like, ‘Look at the grass moving!’” Terrence said in his announcer-style Massachusetts accent. “And people would be like, ‘Really? Oh, my God!’ It was insane. Anything was getting millions of views.”

During Hurricane Milton, the GoFundMe for Dan raised \$45,000. GoFundMe got involved because it was growing so rapidly, and Dan’s bank account was not connected with the fundraiser, so they questioned where the funds were going, extending the verification process.

Brandon Gilchrist, otherwise known as CheckTheStar, got involved with Dan once Milton passed.

“He came in and basically took over him. ... He took him away from the boat so I wasn’t able to talk to him,” Terrence said. “They started just calling out videos saying ‘Terrence is stealing all the money!’”

“I don’t have contact with this guy anymore, just because I need to leave the situation.”

Terrence then reported that hateful messages were being sent to his home landline, his friends, and people were reaching out to his parents and sister to encourage him to do the right thing and donate the money to Dan.

“It was never supposed to get to where it is now. Joe has a bank account but no identification and no way to get in the bank,” Terrence explained in a TikTok two days after Milton hit. “I’ve gotten \$7,000 in cash, which I will be giving to him today. The rest of the money will be sent to Dan as soon as he gets his bank account information set.”

After he posted this TikTok, things seemed to calm down on Terrence’s end.

Terrence said, “I don’t have contact with this guy anymore, just because I need to leave the situation. I didn’t want to get any more involved. It was getting kind of dangerous.”

However, Dan was arrested a week later by Tampa police for remaining on department land from sunset to sunrise for ten days, according to the criminal report. The affidavit also mentioned that Dan “does not have an accessible Marine Sanitation Device aboard his vessel and no record of properly disposing of his human waste. He further advised that he was using a bucket or cup to urinate in, creating a hazard to public health and safety.”

CheckTheStar and Dan are no longer in communication, and Dan is no longer staying with him, according to CheckTheStar’s recent livestream.

“I’ve got to admit, when it comes between Dan and Check, there are no good guys in this situation,” TikTok influencer Noah Glenn Carter said on Oct.

26. “The only good guy involved in this situation was Terrence, and he already got out at the perfect time so he didn’t have to go through all of this nonsense.”

After a wild month, with 700 million total views watching Terrence, he says he “hasn’t been posting that many videos. I kind of need to get a break from all this because it’s a lot. I got people making videos about me, people that I’ve never met.”

Terrence has now lost around 2 thousand followers since the hurricane content ended and has been posting less. Tampa locals and his original followers have remained supportive though. “They’re all like, ‘Oh, we watch your videos! You’re like our local news guy.’ So everybody’s been awesome.”

Terrence says he has not gotten paid since this claim to fame as hurricane content goes against TikTok guidelines. “What’s the difference between the weatherman and what I do? How can you say it’s unsafe?”

Amidst the support, he is getting asked what the next move is for his brand of Tampa Terrence.

“I’d love to go into broadcasting maybe,” said Terrence. “Even being on the news and being out in the field, I think would be kind of fun.”

QUICK FACTS

Lieutenant Dan

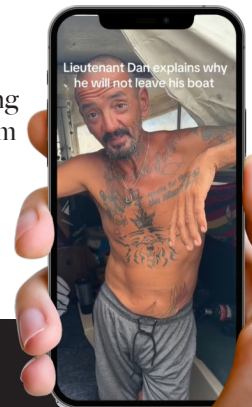
Nickname: Inspired by the character off Forest Gump

Real Name: Joe Malinowski

Location: Lives on a boat docked alongside Hillsborough River in Tampa, FL

Internet Reach: Helped Terrence’s videos accumulated over 700 million views combined

Legal Issues: Arrested for staying on public land from sunset to sunrise





"It was awful trying to get gas. I mean, there was no gas."

The aftermath of Hurricane Milton in the Weizers' neighborhood near Midtown, where Workman stayed during the storm. Debris has been collected onto the curb. Photos courtesy of Jaden Workman.

Riding Out The Storm: A Students Experience Through Hurricane Milton

By Franchesca Murrugarra

The week immediately following Hurricane Helene came with its own whirlwind of activity, with students rushing back to campus, settling in, checking new due dates, and watching as the news poured in by the hour, reporting the storm's widespread devastation that crossed state lines.

For Jaden Workman — an ROTC cadet majoring in applied sociology and triple minoring in leadership studies, military science, and criminology — that week was her time to recover and catch up on schoolwork.

"I had classes — makeup classes — and I had tattoo appointments," said Workman, with an amused smile on her face. "I was just in work mode that whole week because we had tons of work to make up from Helene."

Hints of normality slowly started returning to The University of Tampa, and that next Saturday after Hurricane Helene, Workman got to attend the Tampa Spartan Battalion Alumni Association. At this ROTC luncheon, she was introduced to prominent people like Paul and Maria Weizer, a UTampa alumni couple who graduated in '94 and '96, respectively.

That same day, Oct. 5, was when news of another storm system forming in the Gulf of Mexico came along. The warning of another major hurricane coming less than 10 days after Hurricane Helene hit loomed over a weary Florida.

Workman lived in a dorm on campus, meaning that an evacuation order would have been inevitable with the University being located in Zone A. She soon began her search on Oct. 5 for flights to her home in Cleveland, Ohio, after she received the campus-wide message issued by UTampa's Emergency Operations that stated Tropical

Depression 14 was being monitored and was expected to develop further as it traveled eastward.

The flights that Workman found cost \$300, which had risen from its usual cost of \$180 for a round-trip flight to Cleveland — an increasing trend that appeared in the cost of flights heading out of Tampa, despite airlines' claims against the allegations.

Feeling unsure about booking the expensive flight, she called her mom for advice on whether this was a flight worth investing in.

"I did want to go home," explained Workman. "I went home for Helene, but I was like, 'I really can't

"I went home for Helene, but I was like, 'I really can't book another trip again, right? I don't know how long this will last.'"

book another trip again, right? I don't know how long this will last."

Since UTampa initially stated that weekend that there were no plans at the time for changes in campus operations, Workman's mom advised that it might be better to wait to book that flight back home until classes were officially canceled. Workman agreed, as she felt at the time that she was "jumping the gun" on evacuating again.

However, once UTampa officially announced the cancellation of classes and the evacuation of the entire campus, Workman decided to look for that

original flight.

"When I looked again, it jumped to, like, \$850 for the flight. Same place, round trip — it was the same flight, basically. So that was worrisome because, financially, I don't want to do that."

Despite the various claims of airlines that they did not price-gouge before the storm and capped the maximum prices of flights, the jump in prices in just the span of hours was alarming. As UTampa was located in a mandatory evacuation zone, many students who lived on campus — including Workman — had to evacuate and find their own way to safety. The price inflation of flights was a barrier for many looking for that safety.

With no immediate way home, the junior student's next phone call went to her best friend at UTampa, asking if she would be leaving town — if she had any plans on where to go. Her friend said she planned on staying at the evacuation shelter about an hour away that the University set up for students in the event of a hurricane. This was meant as a final resort for students who had nowhere else to go — only four students who lived on campus stayed at the shelter for Hurricane Milton.

For Workman, that was a good plan for the time being, especially since the tropical depression quickly intensified into Hurricane Milton and was gaining traction on its trajectory to Tampa.

With that in mind, Workman also decided to reach out to her ROTC program for additional guidance. Master Sergeant De La Cruz inquired about her situation, and upon learning that she and her friend were planning on heading to the shelter, he quickly called some alumni from the ROTC program who he heard had opened up their homes to shelter students needing a safe place to stay.

And he did. The master sergeant called Paul and

Maria Weizer, the alumni whom Workman had first met over the weekend at the ROTC luncheon. Maria and Paul Weizer soon extended an offer to both Workman and her friend. Workman's friend elected to stick with the shelter that the University offered, while Workman herself decided to take the Weizers up on their offer after consideration.

The Weizers lived about 10 minutes away from campus on the west side of Tampa. It was closer to the water, and while it seemed more dangerous to stay with them due to the proximity, to Workman it felt safe because they had a house that had hurricane-proof windows and a generator. Although the cadet did not really know this couple very well, besides the one event they had together, she headed to their place on Tuesday evening, around 8 p.m.

The following night, as Hurricane Milton made landfall about 65 miles south of Tampa in Siesta Key, Workman and the Weizers found solace in the time they shared together, watching childhood cartoons streamed through the Apple TV that they were able to connect with their iPhone.

"They had three channels, and one of the channels was Cartoon Network. And all of the networks broadcasted were old, like old cartoon films. We watched old Snoopy cartoons and a bunch of classic black-and-white shows that I couldn't name," the cadet recounted with a smile. It was a sliver of peace that they enjoyed while the winds of Milton continued to howl outside.

In the aftermath, the trio was able to remain relatively safe and had minimal damage from the storm. Although they lost electricity for the week following the storm, they had a generator that allowed them to use the basic necessities. They had water. They were able to cook meals, like a simple rice dish with vegetables and spam, which Workman had never tried before that moment.

"For me, honestly, [Milton] didn't affect me that much," explained Workman. "I was in a house, and hardly any damage came to the house. ... Now, the surrounding neighborhood had a little bit more damage. Their neighbors across from them had a huge downed tree that went over the driveway but, thankfully, didn't hit the house."

Workman and the Weizers walked around the neighborhood in the days after and helped the neighbors with the cleanup, with the tree limbs and branches that had accumulated all over. The cadet also recalled the constant popping of the generators in the neighborhood and the moments when it fused out because of its constant usage.

On Sunday, Oct. 13, UTampa announced the

"Everyone was fed up that day"

reopening of the campus, and Workman soon bid farewell to the Weizers and the home that kept them all safe.

The shortage of gas in the city was one issue that Workman could recall after leaving the Weizers.

"It was awful trying to get gas," said Workman,

with a shake of her head. "I mean, there was no gas. That Monday through Friday of the very next week, I knew a lot of people who were unable to do stuff, unable to work, and unable to go get groceries because they just didn't have a full tank."

The following Sunday morning, Workman called about 10 local gas stations in the area, and all said that they were closed or didn't have gas. In a stroke of luck, she managed to find fuel at a gas station in Ybor City, where police were stationed and escorting people to specific pumps. Although

hurricane for UTampa itself, she said, "As people started getting back on campus, you could definitely tell that people were hurting. A lot of classes, a lot of professors didn't have power themselves. They couldn't teach class. They couldn't even Zoom. A lot of the professors were very lenient on work, because their whole lesson plan kind of got messed up."

Despite the challenges, Workman appreciated how the UTampa community came together to support one another after Hurricane Milton. She



Photos courtesy of Jaden Workman.

the wait was incredibly long, the result was worth it.

Workman recognized her huge luck in getting any gas at all, and at the advice of a friend, she only filled her tank halfway (which would last about 5 to 7 days) so that others in the area could get gas as well.

Another memorable moment of the aftermath was the community coming together to help others, especially at the Portico Cafe where Workman volunteered every Sunday to help feed people in need. Despite the complete power outage in downtown that day, which split the volunteer count in half, Workman was thankful that she was able to help.

Since there was no electricity, the volunteers opened early and made plenty of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to give out as bagged lunches, and then when the church nearby opened up, they had bagged lunches as well with a ham and cheese sandwich, fruit, and a bag of chips.

Everyone was fed that day.

As Workman reflected on the aftermath of the

also recognized the hard work of campus facilities staff and dining hall workers, who had to deal with their own recovery while still showing up to support students.

"I know Campus Safety and all the custodians and all the staff, like, they've been working very, very hard to get the University up and running and looking the same as if nothing happened. So I'm very thankful for them. But the dining hall and that kitchen staff, like, they got affected too. They lived close by. And so sometimes, I'll talk to some of the workers in the dining hall, and they'll be like, 'Yeah, you know the hurricane, we got some damage to work through, you know, our house and stuff, but nothing major.' But they come back to work, and so they're still recovering, just like the students."

Workman nodded her head and reflected on weeks that have passed since both hurricanes impacted Florida.

"I think getting back to normal is still happening," she said.

**Are you passionate about
storytelling, photography,
graphic design, or uncovering
the latest campus news?**

Join Us!

Want To Advertise With The Minaret?

Contact us at
ana.ortiz@spartans.ut.edu

Address

401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Box P
Tampa, FL 33606

Office

Vaughn Center 211
Phone: (813) 257-3636

Online

Website: theminaretonline.com
Email: ana.ortiz@spartans.ut.edu
Instagram: [@theminaret](https://www.instagram.com/theminaret)

**This could
be you!**





M
MINARET