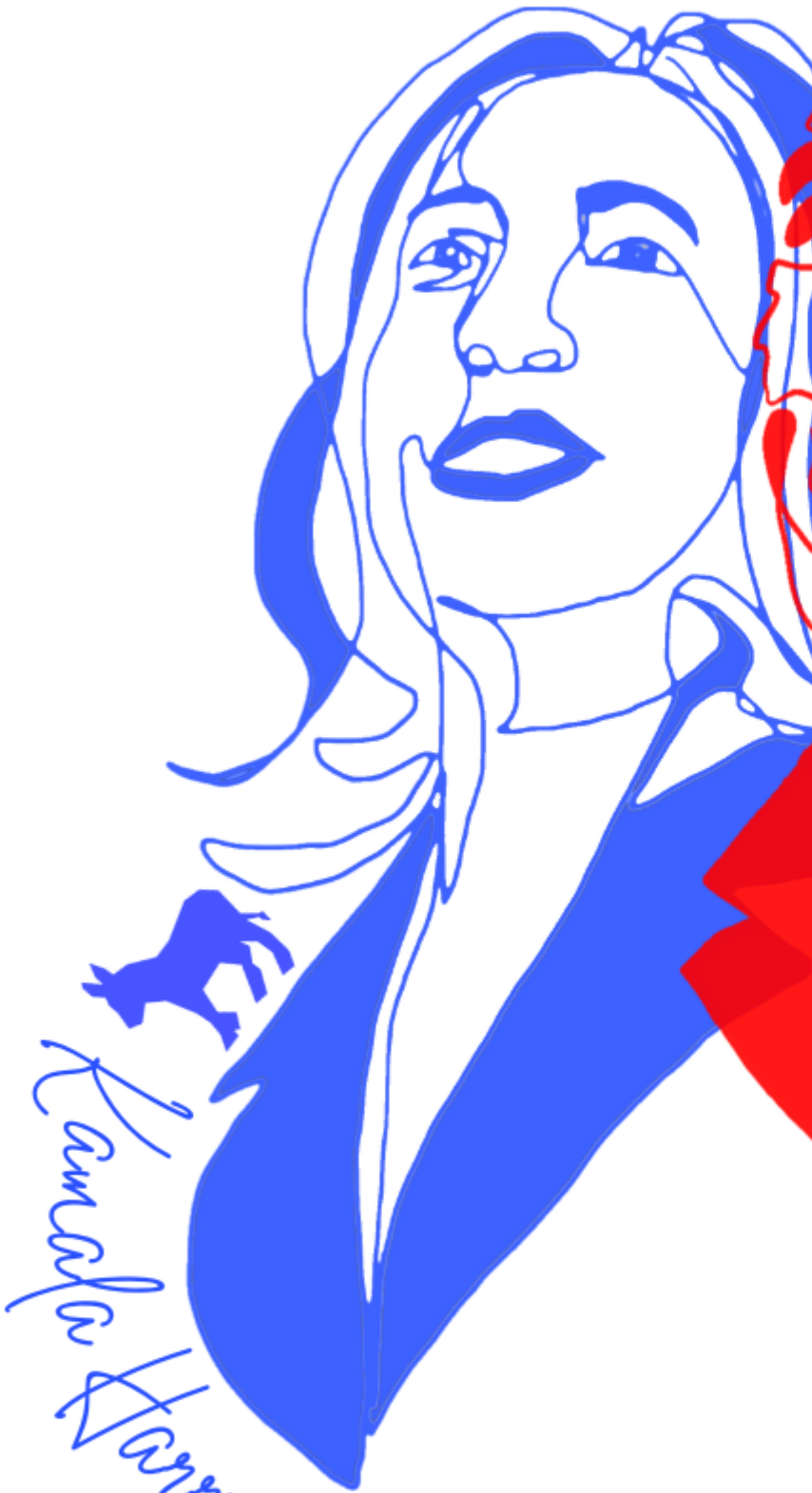


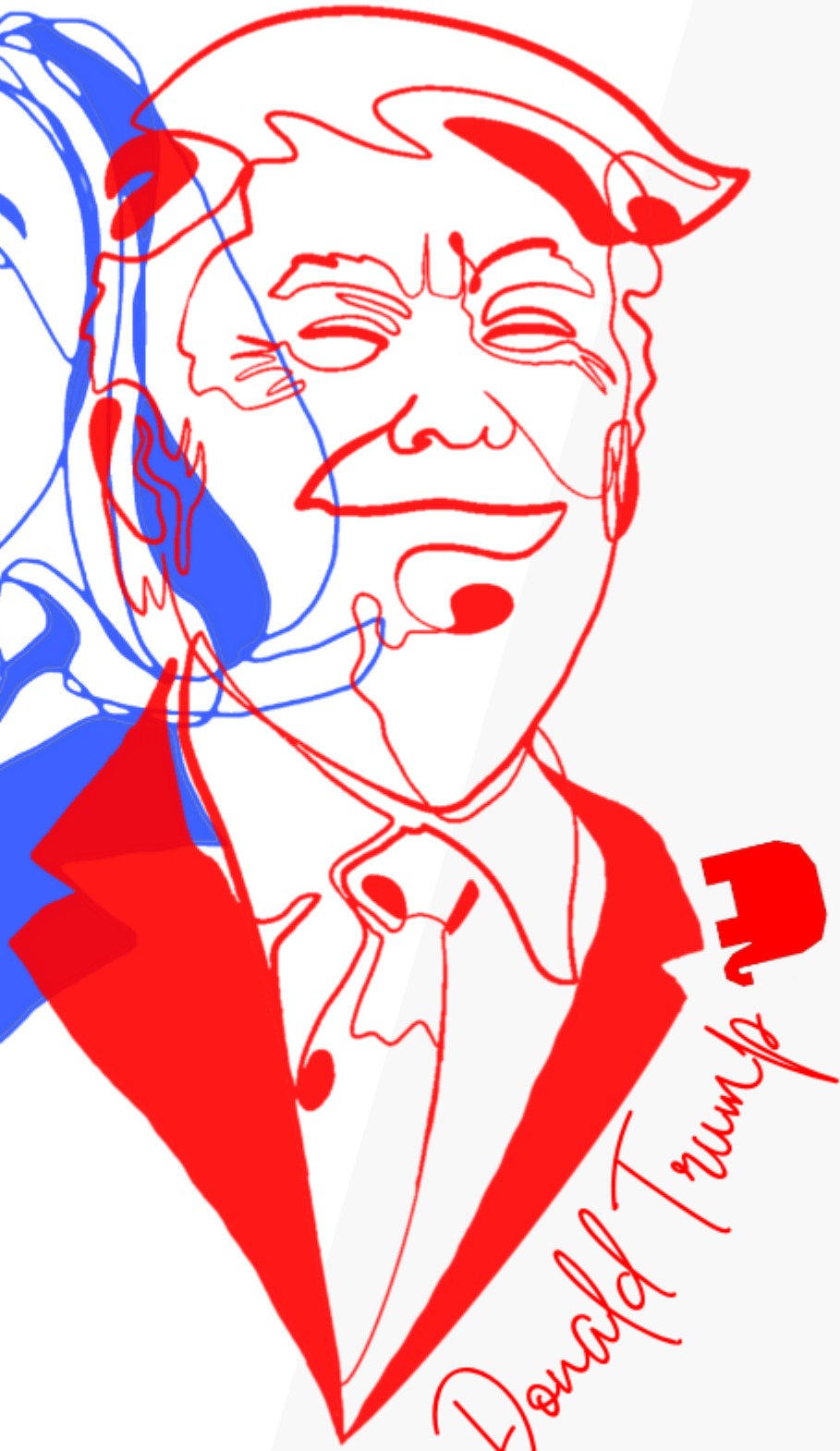


NOVEMBER
2024

THE LIONS' PRIDE
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Kamala Harris



Donald Trump



THE LIONS' PRIDE
MEDIA GROUP



2024

NOVEMBER

Does my vote truly count?

Hannah Lynn
World News Editor

When voting—especially during the presidential election—many citizens may face an important question: With millions of registered voters in the United States, does my vote truly count in terms of determining who becomes president for the next four years?

This concern is also present at the state level, where citizens consider who represents them in state legislatures, and even at the local level with town and city commissioners. This question, though, is amplified during the federal vote for president.

This concern arises from the fact that American citizens do not directly elect the president. The U.S. presidential voting system relies upon the Electoral College. Essentially, Americans cast their votes for the candidate they believe would be the best president, and based on these results, electors are likely to vote in favor of the candidate that the state’s citizens support.

The concept of the Electoral College was established in Article II of the U.S. Constitution by the framers, including Alexander Hamilton. This article outlines the executive branch and its duties, detailing the various roles of the president.

Regarding the Electoral College, the framers wrote in the Con-

stitution, “The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each, which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate.”

In a modern context, the Electoral College electors give voice to the wishes of the citizens they represent. These electors are selected by the state party and voted in by the citizens, giving voters a say in who their electors are. During elections, citizens cast their votes, and the electors typically cast their vote based on the party direction based upon those votes. Although faithless electors may choose to vote differently, this is uncommon, allowing citizens multiple opportunities to express their choices.

Regarding representation in the Electoral College, a state’s electoral votes are based on the number of members that it has in the House and the Senate; for example, California has 54 electoral votes, while Georgia only has 16 electoral votes due to differences in population size.

Due to this electoral system, many Americans feel their votes may not matter, especially if they live in a non-battleground state that

is strongly red or blue. This is one of two major criticisms the Electoral College faces today.

Even though it may take time, voting for what one feels is best for the state and what they truly believe in—rather than voting for the candidate perceived to be the likely winner in a specific state—can start a movement. One vote can inspire other people to stand up for what they believe in, demonstrating that there are more people with similar views. This shows that even a single vote can matter in starting a movement.

The concern of “losing” in an election is something many voters and candidates face—not only at the federal level, but in every election. Unfortunately, someone loses, and in recent polarized times, the margin of loss that candidates face has become increasingly narrow, highlighting how every vote matters and can have a significant impact.

The importance of even one more vote can be demonstrated here at Saint Leo. In the most recent election for town commissioners, seat five was decided by a whopping one vote, illustrating how one individual determined the fate of the commission and the impact that a single vote can have.

“Yes... I think my vote counts.... if enough people vote a certain way, although they may not win, it’s showing a message that a lot of people think like that or believe

in a certain position. Your vote is counting because your voice is being heard, and we are the most important part of democracy,” says Emily Shute, a junior majoring in political science major at Saint Leo University.

Even though there are many people voting in this election with diverse political beliefs, a citizen’s vote is typically reflected through the Electoral College, as electors often align with the popular vote of the state. While it may not be the deciding vote, every single vote still does matter, so get out and vote, Lions!



Kamala Harris is the Democratic nominee for president and currently serves as vice president in the Biden administration. Her vice presidential pick is Tim Walz. (Photo taken from Instagram @kamalaharris)



Donald Trump is the Republican nominee for president of the United States, marking his third run for the office. His vice presidential pick is J.D. Vance. (Photo taken from Instagram @realdonaldtrump)

Newsroom

The Lions’ Pride Media Group is the student-run publication of Saint Leo University, free from institutional interference from conception to print. We publish in print once monthly, and weekly online at our website and through our social media sites. It is the mission of The Lions’ Pride Media Group to provide accurate news and diverse opinions that are important to the Saint Leo community, and our goal is to inform and entertain readers while providing thought-provoking journalism without fear of reprisal.

We are located in the Student Activities Building in Office 106.

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Send letters to the editor to TheLionsPrideNewspaper@gmail.com. Guidelines: 500 word maximum. Do not use profane or slanderous language. Faculty must include name and rank. Students must include name, major, and graduation year. Include phone number to verify authorship. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, spelling, or libel.

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POLICIES



DONALD TRUMP

VS

KAMALA HARRIS

ECONOMY

Promote economic recovery by reducing federal education program funding and increasing import tariffs

ECONOMY

Raise minimum wage, expand apprenticeships, boost union support

HEALTHCARE

Replace the Affordable Care Act

HEALTHCARE

Cap insulin prices, expand Medicare to home care

CLIMATE

Boost fossil fuels, roll-back climate regulations

CLIMATE

Strengthen clean energy, increase environmental justice efforts

CIVIL RIGHTS

Strengthen abortion laws, strengthen immigration policies

CIVIL RIGHTS

Protect abortion and voting rights, pass the Equality Act

From registration to ballot: How to successfully vote

Emily Hernandez Dominguez
Managing Editor

As election season approaches, political ads and signs transform the landscape, becoming the defining decor of the season.

A general election is scheduled to take place in the U.S. state of Florida on Nov. 5, 2024. During the election, voters will have the opportunity to select the President and Vice President of the United States, as well as candidates and amendments specific to their state. In Florida, the ballot will include candidates for local Senate and House positions, along with up to six amendments for Floridians to consider. Additionally, based on county and city, the ballot will include other local candidates.

During this time, arguments are heard for why people should vote for certain candidates or issues, but sometimes what's needed is information on how to vote. With different voting methods, deadlines, and requirements, it can be challenging to navigate the process.

To be eligible to vote, you must first register. Throughout the election process, it is essential for those wanting to vote to research their state and local rules and regulations, as these can vary signifi-

cantly between states, counties, and even cities.

The most accessible way to register to vote is by visiting one's state or county voting website. There, a link can be found that provides instructions on how to register and outlines the requirements. Everyone must be 18 to vote, but in states like Florida, voters can register at 16.

Once voters register and confirm their registration is valid, it is time to decide how they would like to vote. There are three main methods of voting in Florida: requesting a ballot by mail, vote in person on Election Day, or take advantage of early voting options.

Voting by mail allows a ballot to be cast from home instead of going to a polling place. The ballot will include directions and an envelope for returning your vote. It's important to follow the instructions carefully to ensure the ballot is filled out correctly and counted. This method is ideal for students who are away from home and cannot go back in time to vote in person.

To request a ballot, voters must visit your local voting website. Keep in mind that there are deadlines for both requesting and submitting a mail-in ballot.

On Election Day, Florida residents can vote from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., but the opening and closing times for polling locations vary from state to state, and in some states, polling hours vary by city or county. For those in line to vote in Florida, any voters waiting in line at 7 p.m. will have the opportunity to cast a ballot.

"I vote in person because I genuinely love voting," says Jasmyn Moreno, a senior in social work. "The minute I turned 18, that's what I wanted to do first."

While the official Election Day is on Nov. 5, in the state of Florida amongst others, voting begins before that. For those who have an opportunity to head to their polling location, or is their first time, early voting is another great opportunity to vote physically and avoid large crowds.



In a civics and history classroom, this sign serves as a reminder to current and future voters that election season is our opportunity to make our voices heard—because no vote is still a vote. (Photo by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)

"Even though my favorite [method of voting] is on Election Day, the more practical one is early voting," says Christina Cazanave, M.S.W., director of field education and instructor of undergraduate social work at Saint Leo University. "What if you made a mistake and you went to the wrong polling location? You may not be able to go to the new one [on Election Day], but with early voting you have plenty of time. And even though it may not have the same feel...Be proud you still voted, even if it was early."

Whether voting during early voting or on Election Day, voters must bring a current and valid photo ID with their signature. Some examples are Florida driver's license, Florida identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, or a United States passport. If one's photo ID does not include their signature, they will be asked to provide another ID that has a signature.

Before voting, in addition to researching candidates and amendments, take the time to understand the specifics regarding polling hours, locations, and requirements based on one's place of residence.

Misconceptions about voting can arise from a lack of information. For instance, students who are

away at college often face challenges when trying to vote away from home. To physically cast a vote, they must be in their designated voting district, meaning they cannot simply go to any polling location. Elections have specific rules, so it's crucial to visit one's local voting page to find out where they can vote.

Another misconception that discourages voters is the notion that their vote does not count. Many people believe that their individual vote won't make a difference, but every vote contributes to the overall outcome of an election.

"In 2022, in Florida, there were 10 House races that were decided by 4,000 votes or less. Two of those races, both in Miami-Dade County, one was decided by less than 500 and less than 250," Cazanave said. "Students may feel like they might not make a difference in the general election, and sometimes that is a true statement, but when it comes to your state and local elections, that's where those votes matter."

No matter how you decide to vote, take time to know your voting rights and rules. For more information on voting visit, <https://www.nass.org/can-i-vote> to learn more about specifics regarding your eligibility to vote or to register.



Every vote counts; after casting your ballot, celebrate your civic duty with a sticker that says you did your part. (Photo by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)



Early voting is not only the most practical way to cast your ballot, but it also brings the same excitement as Election Day. (Photo by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)

Empowering the vote: How Saint Leo University prepares students for election season

Brianna Brinker
Staff Writer

On Nov. 5, a new president of the United States will be selected. The candidates running are Donald Trump for the Republican Party and Kamala Harris for the Democratic Party. The candidate who has the most Electoral College votes will become the new president of the United States.

At Saint Leo University, there are many 18-to 24-year-olds who will be voting this year for the first time. With this being said, sometimes it's hard as a young adult to know who to vote for, or even know how to vote.

With the election right around the corner, Saint Leo has various ways to prepare students for the voting season.

Saint Leo has political clubs such as the College Republicans, Student Government Union, and the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society. These clubs host events that show students how to be involved in the presidential election and introduce them to the idea that voting in presidential elections is important.

The College Republicans club hosts voting registration events, and are planning to host an election watch party on Nov. 5 at 8 p.m.

On Sept. 13, the Student Government Union sponsored an event called the Election Palooza, in association with the Town of Saint Leo, Fla. to educate students on how to vote.

Professor Christina Cazanave, instructor of the undergraduate social work program, describes an event that recently happened in preparation for the election.

"This past spring, the social work department held a Civic Engagement Day that over 80 SLU [Saint Leo University] students attended. During the day, community partners, like the Campus Vote Project, talked to students about how they could get involved in the upcoming elections," says Cazanave.

Campaigns at Saint Leo also hold an importance as we prepare for the upcoming election. The



Student Government Union has hosted many events in preparation for the presidential election. (Photo from @saintleosgu on Instagram)

"Why We Vote" campaign, which is sponsored by the Department of Social Work, helped register students on Sept. 24, National Voter Registration Day.

Also, State Representative Susan Valdes came to speak to students at Saint Leo about voting and its importance this past spring.

Professors also play a huge role in students' lives and are great educators when it comes to politics and helping students vote for the first time. They have plenty of experience with voting and are happy to teach students about it.

Dr. Austin Trantham, assistant professor of political science and Debate Club faculty advisor, shared information on how professors at Saint Leo prepare students for the upcoming election.

"Saint Leo professors are passionate about ensuring that students are informed about the up-

coming election and its significance for our country," says Dr. Trantham.

This past fall, as part of the Constitution Day's celebration, several faculty members answered the important question: Does your vote count?

"The discussion included thoughts on the Electoral College, voter registration and suppression, and local political engagement. The students in attendance asked very thought-provoking questions to the faculty panelists, and everyone enjoyed participating in an enlightening and engaging dialogue," says Dr. Trantham.

Students on campus are also encouraging other students to vote this year.

Emily Shute, president of the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society, and Colleen Kester, vice president, are proud to explain the events they have hosted and

plan to host involving the presidential election.

"So far this semester, we have hosted the presidential and vice presidential debates, encouraging people to learn about the candidates and policies. We plan to host a voting booth the week before the election to see who Saint Leo University is voting for and what issues are most important to voters."

Shute and Kester explained that the purpose of these events is to get students involved during election season, to get them thinking of who they want to be their next president, and to get them to vote on Nov. 5.

Saint Leo encourages these clubs because they want to educate students who are unsure about voting in order to help them feel more comfortable with voting, explained Shute and Kester.

"Also, while giving us the opportunity to spread awareness by hosting events and being accommodating to us [to be able to make a platform] to encourage students to vote," said Shute and Kester.

If you are interested in voting in the presidential election, there are assigned polling locations depending on your location, or you can request an absentee ballot, which allows you to vote by mail. There are instructions on how to fill out your ballot and how to return your ballot.

On Election Day, the polling locations are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dr. Cazanave encourages students to take the time to vote, because every vote counts.

"Gen Z and millennials are on track to outpace the older generations at the voting booth if they come out to vote. What would the world look like if their voices became the majority? Exciting to think about," said Dr. Cazanave.

Saint Leo prepares its students for this voting season with many campaigns, clubs, events, and professor advice available to all students. The Lions of Saint Leo are ready to vote in the presidential election of 2024!



The Department of Social Work is filled with passionate students who are excited for this upcoming election. (Photo provided by Dr. Austin Trantham)



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Politics beyond the personal identity: Respectful social engagement in an era of political chaos

Hadassa Ferreira

Arts and Culture Editor

Have you ever stopped to question why politics is important? We live in an era of significant political polarization, in which the true essence of political debate often gets lost amidst partisanship, political idolatry, and intense extremism.

This era is filled with conflicts stemming from political disagreements, causing many people to feel constrained in talking about politics and sharing their opinions on social or political issues that directly affect them.

It is always important to remember that politics is more than two parties or political candidates positioned on a “celebrity-like” spectrum. Politics is about a society that collectively decides what is best for the nation and implements policies that can effectively change people’s lives for the better.

You might be wondering what the reason behind this phenomenon of social constraint regarding politics is. The reality is that, for the first time, politics has become more than just a social element; it has become a part of people’s identities.

This situation causes people to view political topics—especially heated ones, such as human rights, immigration, and abortion—as matters of personal representation. This means that discussions about these issues are not merely suggestions for “creating a better world” but rather dictations on how individuals should live their lives.

“People tend to shut up more now because social issues that we are talking about more, especially nowadays, have become, a lot of times, super central [to a person’s identity],” said Frank Orlando, instructor of political sciences at Saint Leo University.

For instance, opinions on sensitive topics, such as the situation at the American border and the control of immigrant entry, may be perceived by first-generation Americans as a direct invalidation of their family history.



Our generation has a huge power of transformation! This is why our involvement in this upcoming election is so important! (Photo by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)

Likewise, suggestions for policies that prohibit suppression of gender identity in children considered transgender may be viewed as a direct attack on the LGBTQ+ community, particularly the transgender group.

Since the political landscape deeply affects many individuals, people tend to avoid political debates because it can be challenging to discuss issues with those who want others to see them and the current social context as they see themselves.

Discussing politics and finding common denominators in this political context—where people view their candidates in an intensely personal way—has become increasingly difficult.

Nowadays, partisanship and candidates have become representations of personal identities. As a result, people often perceive disagreements about their political party or favorite candidate as personal attacks.

Orlando also mentioned, “Politics is taking a bigger role in

people’s lives, and partisanship is meaning a big part of people’s identity. Politicians now become an ‘avatar’ that is a representative of people’s beliefs and identities. So, people feel attacks on politicians have become attacks on themselves.”

However, it is always important to remember that we should not allow the personal figures of candidates to overshadow significant political proposals in the shaping of our electoral opinions. We also should not view opposing political opinions about our candidates as personal offenses.

A political candidate is just another citizen with the same rights and duties as everyone else; the only difference is that political candidates work for the people in managing the nation’s government. Politicians are professionals hired when elected, and as such, they should be treated like any other type of professional and held accountable when they fail.

When we encounter such a chaotic political landscape,

where any opinion might be seen or considered offensive and cause unnecessary stress, we may feel that politics is unimportant and not worth our time.

But the reality is that everything that shapes our society is influenced by politics, and the best way to ensure that our government meets our needs is by getting involved respectfully.

Now, you might think that getting involved means placing yourself in the midst of the political battles happening out there. But if you think that way, you misunderstood the concept completely. Getting involved means researching possible solutions to social issues that you feel need change and finding politicians—regardless of their party—who address those issues in the way you agree with.

Additionally, getting involved includes actively listening to the history behind each person’s opinion on heated topics and setting aside personal judgments aside to find a common ground that can benefit multiple sides.

It is also important not to harbor any resentment towards those who vote differently from us, understanding that everyone comes from a different social context and has a unique life history that leads them to take different political paths.

The fear of expressing our opinions and advocating for what we believe in should not exist. Beyond that, sharing our desires for specific policies should not offend others. Everyone has a right to their beliefs, and when opinions are conveyed appropriately—with the right tone, context, and without offensive language—people can engage in political discussions.

Politics, beyond personal identities, examines all levels of society and seeks to comprehend the needs of all social classes. It is a form of politics that acknowledges the historical background of others and expresses itself respectfully.

Politics, beyond personal identities, involves polite discussions about solutions for a better community that embraces everyone and promotes tolerance.

Presidential Election Timeline



July 15

The first day of the 2024 republican national convention, and D announces JD Vance as his

2023

August 2023

First of multiple GOP candidate debates. This debate was among members of the Republican Party and included members such as Mike Pence, Ron DeSantis, and Vivek Ramaswamy.



November 12

Republican candidate Tim Scott drops out of the presidential debate.
- The New York Times

July 13

Assassination attempt on Donald J. Trump at his campaign headquarters in Butler, Pennsylvania.
- Associated Press

2024



January 5

The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear Trump's appeal of the decision to remove him from the Colorado primary ballot.
- Reuters

“ ”



January 10

Chris Christie drops out of the race.
- The Hill



January 16

Asa Hutchinson drops out of the race and endorses GOP Candidate Nikki Haley.
- CNN



January 21

Ron DeSantis drops out of the presidential race and endorses Trump.
- The New York Times



The soundtrack of America: How music has shaped U.S. political discourse

Sophia Sullivan

Editor-in-Chief

For as long as the United States has been a country (and, even before that), politics have intertwined with music as a means of expression, persuasion, and awareness.

All the way from the very beginnings of the country, Americans saw music as a way to express their growing frustrations with England during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783).

“The use of music for war-time and for political persuasion is very old,” said Cynthia Selph, Associate Professor of Music at Saint Leo University.

Broadsides, typically anonymous single-page papers that often served as posters, were instrumental in the spread of political commentary and information. “The Liberty Song,” one of the very first American tunes and the American National Anthem for some of history, was originally printed and distributed on a broadside during the Revolutionary War.

Furthermore, the popular Patriot song, “Yankee Doodle,” was originally a British song that they used to poke fun of the rag-tag Patriot military, “Yankee” being a term used to mock the colonists, and “doodle” a term used for a country hick. But, once the Americans began collecting victories in the war, they adopted the song to throw it right back in the face of the British.

When the British surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, General George Washington ordered the Fife and Drum Corps to play “Yankee Doodle” as they signed the treaty. As the British gave up power of the colonists, the Yankees performed a song initially used to make fun of themselves—talk about a powerful message!

The Fife and Drum Corp was still present by the time the Civil War (1861-1865) rolled around. Songs like “Battle Hymn of the Republic” were a symbol of the Union during the war, while “Dixie” was a

sort of anthem for the Confederacy.

Presidential use of music is another historical practice, which continues to this day.

“John Adams was the first president that had the President’s Own Marine Band,” noted Selph. To this day, every single president has this band play at their inauguration ceremony. The kind of music presidents choose to play at their inaugurations can be extremely telling of who they are as a person, said Selph.

In recent years, Obama exemplified this concept when he had a new musical piece written for his inauguration titled “Air and Simple Gifts” by the famous composer John Williams.

“For example, Obama chose to have a new piece written, Air and Simple Gifts, for his inauguration, because that is an original American Shaker tune,” said Selph. “That meant something to him, representing the authenticity of the American spirit.”

In 1961, the Kennedys broke barriers when they had the first Black soloist perform in the White House, Grace Busby.

“The Obamas had a real Renaissance, because they did the White House concerts on a very regular basis, and they tended to focus on black artists and only American songwriters,” noted Selph.

According to Selph, presidents have been well-known for using music as a “political tool.”

“Pay attention to the music they play,” encouraged Selph. For example, George W. Bush loved playing country music at his rallies and used that to connect with the American people.

“Country music came to symbolize a certain aspect of patriotism,” said Selph.

Famous feuds in the country music community have often caused upheaval in the American political climate, such as The Chicks (formally The Dixie Chicks) and Toby Keith in 2003. When Natlie Maines commented on Keith’s song “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry

American),” citing it as insensitive, The Chicks virtually became blacklisted in the genre.

Blacklisting musicians is not a foreign concept in the United States.

“You might be surprised to know that folk musicians were the number one blacklisted musicians,” said Selph. Many folk bands and musicians were perceived as communists based on their views and lyrics. The Weavers lost their record deal, and Pete Seeger couldn’t even perform publicly for a 20-year period in the 1950s to 70s, Selph noted.

Today, music is widely available to everyone with the rise of streaming platforms over radio or CDs. It is virtually inescapable in such a digital age, which, like most things, comes with good and bad.

“It does make things more ubiquitous, but it also splits us into tinier pieces,” said Selph.

People now have more access to music than ever before, which also allows them to create their own little world of media they prefer to consume.

“We have very little music that is universally recognized by just about every single person in the United States,” said Selph.

In the past, events like

the March on Washington (1963) brought thousands of people together and they shared the powerful experience of singing “We Shall Overcome” led by Joan Baez.

The same is true after the Iraq War when Toby Keith released “The Angry American.”

“That just brought out all of that emotion everybody in America felt, said Selph.” “That song became, regardless of what you felt about the Iraq War, the symbol of Americans feeling the gasp of what happened.”

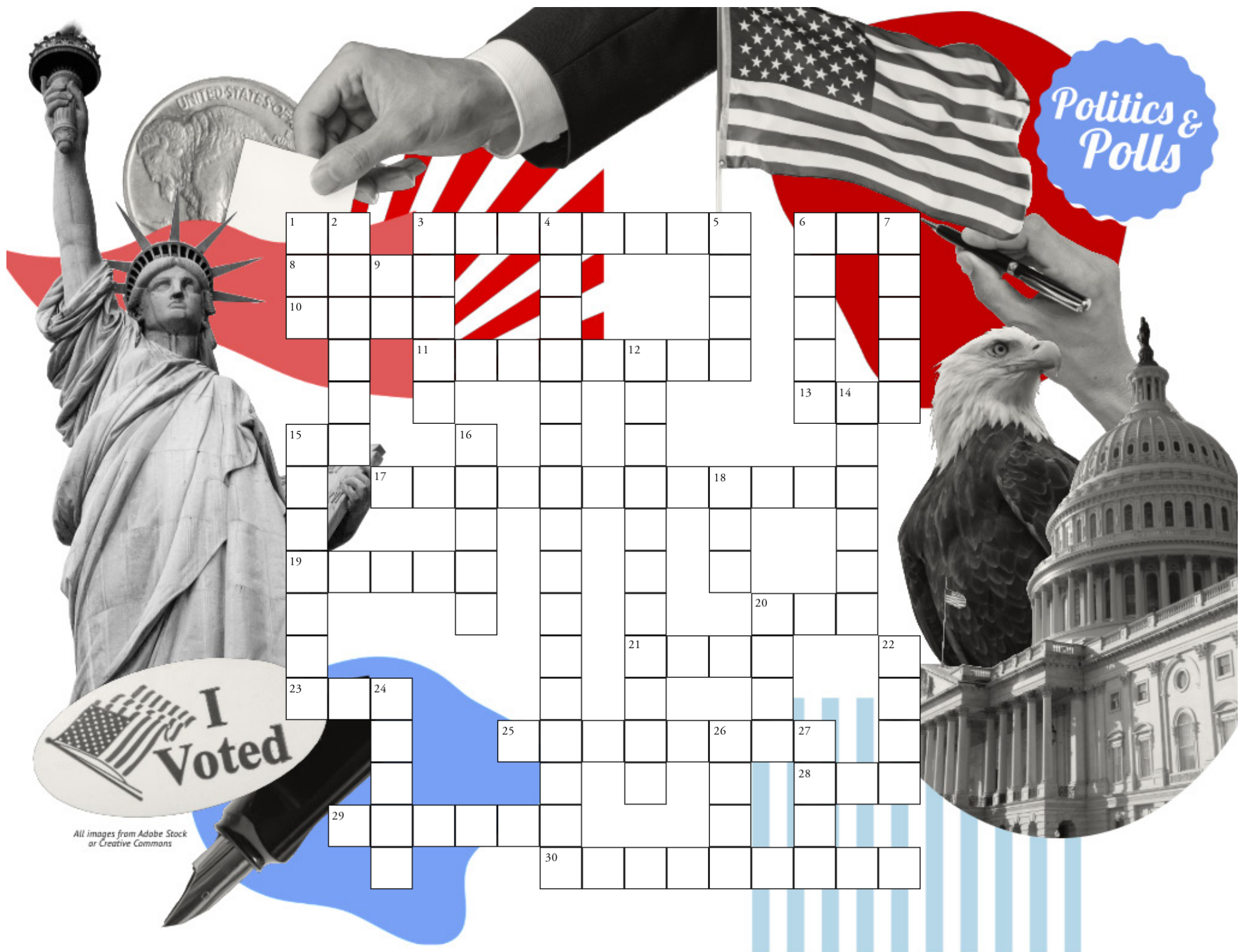
And that is what music does—it is the great container of the human experience, emotions, and endurance that everyone can gain access to. In a way that literature and other media cannot, music creates an atmosphere and space for connection, even across the board of the often-chaotic American political scene.

“Music makes a direct emotional connection with people and it’s immediate, it’s visceral, and it’s memorable.”

Through time, division, and unification, music continues to serve as a timeless vessel for American political thoughts and feelings. Next time you hear the jovial tune of Yankee Doodle Dandy, or stumble across the lyrics of an old folk song, think about the origins and implications of the music you’re listening to. As the United States political landscape continues to unfold and evolve, remember the power of music to connect, feel, and capture moments like nothing else can.



The Star-Spangled Banner was not always the U.S. national anthem—in fact, it was not adopted as so until 1931! (Photo by Sophia Sullivan)



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Across

- 1 Thomas Jefferson's coin, atomically
- 3 Animal of the Republican Party
- 6 Committee dedicated to raising money for a candidate, abbr.
- 8 A president's favorite shape
- 10 What you do on election day
- 11 The group of 538 presidential electors, plural
- 13 Center where the state census information is available, abbr.
- 15 Object necessary to vote
- 17 Occurs on Jan. 20, when the president and v.p. are sworn in
- 19 To establish a bill or law
- 20 The gender of all U.S. presidents so far, youthfully
- 21 Synonym for void in reference to ballots
- 23 The lower chamber of U.S. Congress, abbr.
- 25 Second in command, informally
- 28 The amount of presidents the U.S. has at once
- 29 "Make America Great Again," "Let's Finish the Job," "Together, we can win this."
- 30 Opposite of right wing, theatrically

Down

- 1 Month in which the election takes place, briefly
- 2 What the stickers say
- 3 To vote for
- 4 Go here to vote
- 5 Day of the week election falls on, briefly
- 6 First in command, abbr.
- 7 Voting is seen as this kind of duty
- 9 "Where are you ___?"
- 12 Manipulation of electoral districts, related to Elbridge and a salamander
- 14 Animal of the Democratic Party
- 15 To charge with misconduct, fruitily
- 16 The Democrats and Republicans favorite type of get-together
- 18 Each candidate may have their own fee or ___ plan
- 20 A sad hue
- 22 Franklin D. Roosevelt's coin
- 24 A large meeting of political party members
- 26 Synonym for law
- 27 Divided land in reference to political regulations

For answers, check our Instagram @lionspridemedial

<http://lionsprideonline.com/>

Evolving political understanding: University explorations are more than just general education

Josie Osborne
Campus News Editor

With the upcoming election on November 5, it is more important than ever to understand the intricacies of politics. Whether it's just breaching the surface or diving deeper, delving into the world of policies and national issues is undoubtably daunting. With so many different aspects of life being considered—the environment, health, poverty, property, and more—it feels almost impossible to tackle it all. Thankfully, Saint Leo actually offers great courses for students who want to take the next step into politics.

University Explorations (U.E.s), Saint Leo's alternative to general education, offer a variety of classes that students can take to fulfill not only their program requirements, but also their desire to learn more about their government. U.E.s are more than just general education classes; they are more dynamic and intense than a typical foundational course. These courses dive right into a particular topic and are exceptionally wholehearted, reluctant to oversimplified, widespread curriculums.

From history-based courses like *Revolution Now! Democracy in Troubled Times* and courses that explore political movements such as *Stories of Resistance* to culture-centric courses like *Breaking the Code: Language and Culture* and *Building a Multicultural Society*, U.E.s cover a plethora of information involved in the very policies that students may be voting on. There are also environ-

mental and economic courses like *Evaluating the Predictions of Global Warming* and *Economics for Life*. Even courses like *Film: The Art of Choice* can help students understand propaganda and media used to promote policies and spread campaigns.

Trista Vallee, a junior English major reflects on their experiences in *Immigration: The Changing Face of America*.

"The class has helped me understand how much our legislation and laws have been impacted by immigration," says Vallee. "My personal political standpoint has been strengthened."

Courtney Caton, a Student Success Coach at Saint Leo, explained U.E.s as courses that explore a topic "from the inside out."

Haley Robinson, adjunct professor of sociology and Saint Leo alumna, further developed this idea, going into depth on a couple of the U.E. courses she teaches: *McDonaldization of Society and Feeding the Planet*. For example, in *McDonaldization of Society*, Robinson says that while there's foundational material about McDonalds, the course delves much deeper, tackling the detriments of a hyper efficient society as well as the politics of being a consumer.

"Whether it's how your chicken and the food you eat is processed or how healthcare works," Robinson says, "it's all the same, and everything is Mcdonaldized in that way."

A similar theory can be applied to *Feeding the Planet*, as the modules delve into a plethora of con-

cepts and information, from overconsumption and hyper capitalist economies to environmental aspects like sustainability and land management.

Therefore, while the course may seem simplistic in name, "it's application is infinite," says Robinson. "It's mentally rigorous."

While each individual course may not discuss every sphere of politics, it teaches the students skills they need to evaluate government policies through the process of research, understanding, and reflection. In this way, a unique opinion can be formed which is essential for having a political identity.

The U.E. courses are made to foster a well-rounded education, and in turn, help students create a well-informed world view, says Caton. This is possible due to both the assortment of U.E.s available and the smaller class sizes of Saint Leo, which allows open discussion enriched by an educated, reliable source—the professor.

"We teach curriculum that is multicultural, diverse of both opinion and perspective," says Robinson. She also explained that while the topics of discussion may be uncomfortable, as they challenge previous conceptions and sometimes are sensitive in nature, the class style at Saint Leo provides students with a safe place to ask questions and share perspectives.

Because U.E. classes go outside of the boundaries of a major, they also allow students from a variety of disciplines to engage with unfamiliar material.

"Anyone could gain a new, heightened perspective," says Caton.

Robinson adds to this, saying, "It's the idea of being able to engage with more intense, interdisciplinary material that expands your intrapersonal and personal development."

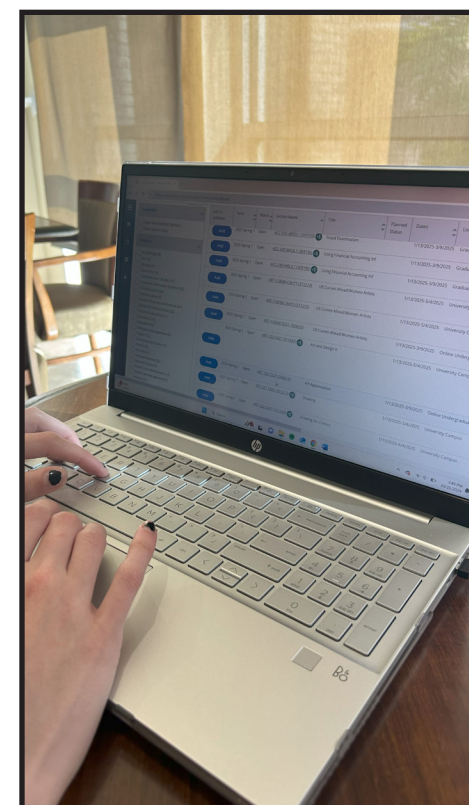
Robinson also shared her own story from her time as a Saint Leo student, particularly in relation to *Immigration: The Changing Face of America*.

"[The class] completely shifted my ideology from where I was previously, because it opened my eyes to world of information

and nuance and empathy that was not available to me at the time," reminisces Robinson.

Going beyond the major also allows students to surpass the idea that their identity is singular, that they are just an English major or just a business major. U.E. classes break through that boundary and remind students of their bones, of their citizenship and of their humanity.

With registration for Spring open, now is the time to explore the list of U.E. classes. If there is a U.E. course you wish to see offered, let us know by completing the survey through the QR code below.



Students can look through the Course Schedule by going to the Academics tab on Elion. You can filter by category, time, dates, and level and can simply click on the course name to read a description. (Photo taken by Josie Osborne.)



Outside of the Student Success Coach offices in Kirk Hall, this display showcases the Saint Leo Core Values which are taught in every U.E. class (Photo taken by Josie Osborne.)

The storms that changed everything: A look at Hurricanes Milton and Helene's impact on Florida communities

Emily Hernandez Dominguez
Managing Editor

Hurricanes have long been a formidable force in Florida's history, impacting the state's landscape, communities, and culture. Each hurricane tells a unique story of resilience and recovery, inspiring everything from hurricane themed cakes at Publix, to the celebrity status of Jim Cantore, a meteorologist from The Weather Channel.

In the past six years, four major hurricanes have made landfall in Florida, and Hurricane Helene was poised to become the fifth, occurring 115 days into hurricane season.

On Sept. 17, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) began monitoring the area where Helene would develop. Almost a week later, on Sept. 24, the NHC named the disturbance Tropical Storm Helene at 11 a.m. The following day, Sept. 25, Helene intensified into a hurricane at 11 a.m. as it passed through the Yucatán Channel and into the Gulf of Mexico. It made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane near Perry, Fla., at 11:10 p.m.

Helene's rapid intensification was driven by unusually warm water in the Gulf of Mexico, which has warmed about 0.34 degrees Fahrenheit per decade since 1970—more than twice the rate of the world's oceans overall.

The impact of Hurricane Helene was catastrophic, affecting Florida and extending to Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. It claimed the lives of over 230 people, making it the deadliest hurricane to strike the United States since Hurricane Maria in 2017. Estimates of the storm's economic impact exceed \$200 billion, potentially making it the costliest hurricane in U.S. history. Thousands of homes and businesses were damaged, roadways were severed, and nearly two million people were left without power.

In Florida, the storm brought winds of 140 miles per

hour within one of the largest wind fields ever to impact the Southeast, along with heavy rain, storm surges, flooding, and tornadic activity. It recorded a 15-foot storm surge and catastrophic sustained winds, severely affecting neighboring states.

"[For] Helene I stayed on campus and helped residence life as part of the emergency management team," said Paul Vitali, a senior honors theatre major with English and art minors. "As an RA [Resident Assistant], it is important to me that my residents stay safe and get weather advisory updates as soon as possible."

A month later, as communities continue to recover, the lasting impact of Helene is evident across the Southeast. The areas most devastated included Florida's Gulf Coast, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Asheville, N.C., faced catastrophic flooding, and while some schools and businesses reopened, many may never resume operations.

Following Hurricane Helene's devastating strike on Florida's Big Bend, Hurricane Milton made landfall two weeks later, further compounding the state's challenges.

On the morning of Oct. 5, 2024, a tropical depression formed in the southwestern Gulf of Mexico, quickly being classified as Tropical Storm Milton. The storm intensified into Hurricane Milton by Oct. 6, and early on Oct. 7, its wind speeds surged from 90 miles per hour to 180 miles per hour in just 15 hours, according to The Weather Channel. Milton's strength fluctuated due to an eyewall replacement cycle and wind shear, allowing it to regain Category 5 intensity on Oct. 8. However, it ultimately lost some strength and made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane on Oct. 9.

In light of the significant impact of Hurricane Helene, citizens began taking precautions to prepare for Milton as new information was released. This led to shortages of essential items such as bottled water, toilet paper, and non-perishable snacks.

One notable difference with

Milton was its direction; it was heading toward Tampa Bay.

Tampa Bay has not been hit directly by a major hurricane since 1921, and authorities feared that this streak of good fortune may be coming to an end. While Tampa Bay experiences fewer hurricanes than other parts of the state due to its location and the typical paths of storms, many residents attribute this relative safety to a more mystical explanation.

Many Floridians believe the reason can be attributed to large burial mounds from the Tocobaga civilization still standing today, with the oldest one overlooking Old Tampa Bay. Some people think the mounds could be providing supernatural protection from hurricanes.

Despite its strengths, Tampa Bay remains vulnerable to hurricanes and other natural disasters. The crescent shape of the bay, combined with hurricane intensity, can lead to significant storm surge. Additionally, the area faces the risk of compound flooding, where storm surge, heavy rainfall, and high river discharge combine to overwhelm drainage systems. Furthermore, the region's infrastructure—such as roads and buildings—can funnel storm surge and flash flooding, making it more difficult for water to disperse effectively.

The impact of Milton, just like Helene, was catastrophic and hit close to home for many.

"I live in Orlando, about five minutes from home from MCO [Orlando International Airport]," Arianna Rodriguez, a senior majoring in political science with a legal studies minor. "The entire day it was windy and raining really hard. The power ended up going out in the middle of the night for a split second."

During the night of the storm, Tropicana Field, home of the Tampa Bay Rays, served as a shelter for first responders and linemen when the fabric roof was ripped off. Just down the street in downtown St. Petersburg, a construction crane collapsed onto the Residences at 400 Central building construction

site, adding to the chaos. Iconic beaches like Clearwater Beach and John's Pass were left unrecognizable due to severe flooding.

At the Saint Leo University campus, the impact was equally significant; trees and fences were toppled, forcing students, faculty, and staff to cancel classes and transition to virtual learning for a week.

"It hurts to see the damage to campus, but the timely cleanup restored my faith in the Saint Leo community," Vitaliti states.

Despite the destruction, many people expressed relief that Milton wasn't worse. The hurricane spared Tampa a direct hit, and the lethal storm surge that scientists feared never materialized.

With hurricane season ending on Nov. 30, communities are coming together to support one another and slowly begin to rebuild, hoping that another catastrophic storm does not take form. While the National Hurricane Center is monitoring the southwest Caribbean for tropical development, it is important to remember to rely on reliable meteorology for accurate information.



Saint Leo University officials had to resort to using parking lots to place garbage bins to keep tree branches and debris. (Photo taken by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)

Check out Campus Gear's table at the Saint Leo Christmas Tree Lighting on Dec. 5, 2024!



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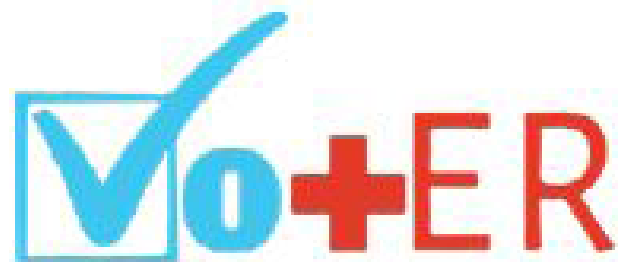
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