

Scuba Diving/Snorkeling Club Debut Student Designed Merchandise

By Kiley Petracek on September 14th, 2022

The Scuba Diving and Snorkeling Club held their first meeting of the year in Plant Hall to announce upcoming events for the school year on Wednesday, September 7th at 8:00PM. The meeting also promoted club merchandise designed by sophomore Shane Madaio.

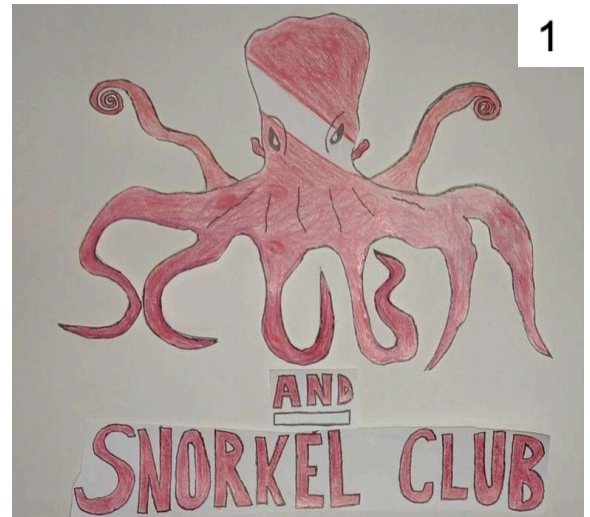
The Scuba Diving and Snorkeling Club is the largest club on The University of Tampa's campus, with an estimated hundred students in attendance for the first meeting of the year in Fletcher Lounge, Plant Hall. The seats were filled shoulder to shoulder in the orientation chairs and students were stacked standing in the back facing a projector in front of the dome-shaped ballroom. This is a larger space than provided last year when it was last held in the Grand Salon.

Specifically new to this year's release of the merchandise, Madaio's art was featured as the winning logo contestant on the club's sweatshirts, t-shirts, stickers, hats, and even kuzi's. Members were able to see the first glance of the available merchandise at the meeting and place orders.

Although he doesn't consider himself an artist, the abstract concept of the octopus's tentacles spelling 'Snorkel Club' on the back of the t-shirts and sweatshirts was inspired by previous logos displayed on the club's Instagram as well as the stuffed octopus in Madaio's room. "I've never seen something I drew be printed and worn by other people before, I think it'll be really cool," he says in anticipation of the merchandise orders.

The reason Madaio decided to return to the club and get further involved in the community after the first meeting his freshman year was because of the offered merchandise, where he bought a hat and shirt. "I'm a very merch-oriented guy," he explains.

Usually, the first meetings are the biggest because "all the freshmen and people that haven't been there before are coming to find out what it's all about. It's always fun having that



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energetic, static feel to it but by the end, as the meetings continue, a lot less people show up,” Madaio states.

The energetic crowd showed their excitement upon announcements of upcoming events such as their updated MegaDive, Devil’s Den, manatee snorkeling and shark scuba diving. As far as upcoming events go, Madaio says, “Rainbow River is one that I heard about that seems cool. They just drop you off the boat and you float down and they pick you up at the end.”

Beginning Fall 2022, the club has decided to announce a constant stream of ‘unofficial’ events that are to be updated in the GroupMe and published on their social media (Instagram: @utscubaandsnorkel) the day of in order to reach a broader audience. Outside of their traditional club meetings on Wednesday’s at 8:00 p.m, these activities will include beach volleyball nights which have been an attraction for some members that aren’t yet scuba certified.

The scuba and snorkeling club has no prerequisites, as you can attend meetings and excursions without being scuba certified. Most club members choose to become certified, which are then recommended to UT’s offered scuba diving course for credit through World of Water located on W Kennedy Blvd.

Madaio is one of the many currently getting scuba certified through UT from the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). Upon the start of the semester, Madaio states, “It was great. It was my first time trying anything like that. It was so unnatural. It felt unnatural but cool at the same time.”

The scuba and snorkeling club also provided students with information on getting registered as a certified scuba diver during the first meeting in an effort to open opportunities for plausible members. Aside from World of Water, the available options include certifications from Adventure Outfitters and Depth Perception.



Since the club is built off of out-of-town excursions, it makes sense that most of the travel and social meetings are considered ‘unofficial’ and left up to the club members to plan out the trips and reinforce gas money outside of the \$20 club fee assigned at the beginning of the year.

The club has continued to be a student-lead production, organizing their own events and providing travel through the members. This is shown even down

to the merchandise, with the front side of the merchandise designed by club officers, while the back was attributed to the logo design winner, Shane Madaio, according to secretary Tyler Stevenson.

The full involvement of the officers as well as the participation from club attendees has provided UT with a community of athletes that are passionate about marine life, the Tampa Bay area, and ultimately each other. "It's a great way to meet people with like-mindedness and the same interests. We always make it a point to never leave each other out. It's pretty much like a big family." Madaio confirms.

As the semester kicks off, active and inactive members alike are able to follow along with meetings and information provided by the club without attending by reading meeting recaps provided by their social media. Students who are not scuba certified are still highly encouraged to join, as the intention of the scuba diving and snorkeling club is to "build a community of lovers of the underwater world," said president Dayten French.

- 1.) Shown is an initial sketch completed by Shane Madaio of the merchandise concept. Courtesy of Shane Madaio and Tyler Stevenson.
- 2.) Shown is the graphic design work after coming to a finalizing point in the production of the club's merchandise. Courtesy of Tyler Stevenson.
- 3.) All of the finalized club merchandise that are articles of clothing showcasing Madaio's artwork are displayed on the order form. Courtesy of Tyler Stevenson.