

Room With a View

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Armed with the design skills and practical building knowledge that they've learned through the architecture curriculum, a pair of Tulane School of Architecture students conceived "Sukkah Outside the Box" to celebrate the seven-day Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot.



Architecture students, left to right, Garrett Jacobs, Michael Greene, Ayo Alao and Nels Erickson put the finishing touches on the sukkah they built outside the Lavin-Bernick Center as part of the celebration of the Jewish harvest festival Sukkot. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Sponsored by Tulane Hillel and working in consultation with Rabbi Yonah Schiller, executive director of [Hillel](#), Garrett Jacobs and Michael Greene designed a sukkah ? a temporary structure that is traditionally covered in natural materials and used for dwelling in and eating meals during the festival. The sukkah, located outside the Lavin-Bernick Center on the uptown campus, was built with the help of other students. The wooden walls of the hut incorporate a placard to explain the significance of the structure and the holiday.

Jewish law specifies that a sukkah's walls can be built of any material. But the roof ? the focal point of a sukkah ? is required to be made of a natural material that is "separated from the earth," typically using palm fronds, says Schiller. The roof must provide shade, yet allow a view of the stars at night.

"When we enter a sukkah, we are encouraged to look towards the roof," he says. "The roof is supposed to recall for us the clouds of glory that protected the Jewish people when they went out of Egypt." The holiday of Sukkot also celebrates the harvesting of the first fruits in ancient Israel.

Other sukkahs have been built on the Tulane campus this holiday season, including a prefabricated one on Bruff quad, also built by Hillel, where a party will be held at 6 p.m. tonight (Oct. 7).

Chabad House, the Jewish student center, also has erected a sukkah in front of McAlister Auditorium. Matzah ball soup is being served there from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily this week through Friday (Oct. 9). The [Chabad](#) celebration will include falafel and music starting at 11 p.m. tonight.