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**Pam Crawford\*** (pcrawfo@ju.edu), Math Department, Jacksonville University, 2800 University Blvd North, Jacksonville, FL 32211. *Airplanes, Hurricanes and the Simplex Method in Finite Mathematics.*

Aviation Management and Aviation Management & Flight Operations are two of the most popular majors at Jacksonville University. These students often join their classmates in Finite Mathematics to ask the question, “When will we ever use the simplex method in our careers?” Hurricane Floyd in September 1999, which closed the university for three days, provided a real-life example of the use of the simplex method by major airlines and formed the background for the first course project. Students were given data on the scattering of airplanes and their crews to other airports due to the hurricane for a fictitious airline. Students then made a “best guess” as to the most cost-efficient method of redistributing the airplanes to get the airline back on schedule. Finally, students were directed to consider the use of the simplex method to find the actual least cost method of redistributing the airplanes and the crews. Only two of forty students managed to find the actual best method when making their first guess. The remaining students were surprised to learn that the method most of them determined as the most cost-effective method was indeed not the most effective! All students expressed amazement that the simplex method might actually have a real-life application for them. (Received September 29, 2000)