

Danielle Markus



OEQoBVDA

Entry details

Entry Name: "Milestones Unlocked" 2025 Commencement Weekend

Institution Name: Manhattan University

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Danielle Markus, Director of Marketing

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Introduction:

The menu for the "Milestones Unlocked" Commencement event was designed to complement the theme while delivering a dynamic and memorable dining experience. Drawing inspiration from New York City and the Manhattan University community, the menu featured a diverse selection of items that balanced creativity, flavor, and presentation. From breakfast through dessert, each component was thoughtfully crafted to reflect variety, inclusivity, and quality. With careful consideration of dietary needs, preparation methods, and food safety standards, the menu not only supported the celebratory nature of the event but also ensured an exceptional and safe dining experience for all guests.

Essay:

The "Milestones Unlocked" Commencement menu was thoughtfully designed to align with the event's theme while delivering a high-quality and engaging dining experience. The menu showcased a strong connection to Manhattan University and its NYC surroundings, featuring items such as fresh NY bagels, locally inspired "Arthur Ave Meatballs," and custom MU "Milestones Unlocked" cookies, reinforcing both creativity and brand identity.

A wide variety of menu options were offered across breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert, ensuring that all guests could enjoy. The menu included gluten-free options and avoided common allergens such as nuts and seeds, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and guest safety. The variety of offerings also provided a balance of

colors, textures, flavors, and temperatures, including cold sandwiches, hot appetizers, savory entrées, and sweet desserts, creating a well-rounded and visually appealing dining experience.

Multiple preparation methods were utilized, allowing for a diverse and high-quality menu execution. In addition, food safety was a top priority throughout the event. HACCP practices were implemented, including establishing critical limits for time and temperature control, particularly for outdoor service, to ensure all food items were safely prepared and served.

This combination of creativity, variety, and operational excellence enhanced the overall success of the event.

Introduction:

The “Milestones Unlocked” catering event theme was designed to celebrate the 2025 Student Commencement Weekend achievements while creatively tying in Manhattan University’s identity. This concept uses a playful yet meaningful approach to graduation, symbolizing both the accomplishments students have achieved and the opportunities that lie ahead. By incorporating a clever double meaning of “M.U.” for Manhattan University, the theme delivers both recognition and brand connection. Through thoughtful planning, intentional design, and cohesive execution, the event creates a memorable experience that resonates emotionally with graduates while delivering a strong visual and conceptual “wow” factor.

Essay:

The “Milestones Unlocked” theme stands out as a thoughtfully executed concept that captures the spirit of graduation while reinforcing Manhattan’s identity. At its core, the theme celebrates student achievement, growth, and the exciting transition into the next chapter of life. The concept of “unlocking” milestones symbolizes both accomplishments and future opportunities, creating a meaningful and relatable narrative for graduates.

A key element of the theme’s innovation lies in its clever wordplay, using “M.U.” as both a nod to Manhattan University and a visual representation of the event’s purpose. This dual meaning adds depth to the concept while strengthening brand connection in a subtle and engaging way. The theme was designed to be both fun and meaningful, striking a balance that resonates with the audience.

To bring the theme to life, careful attention was given to execution, including cohesive visual elements, signage, and design that aligned with the “unlocking” concept. Creative touches were incorporated throughout the event space to reinforce the idea of celebration and achievement, contributing to a strong overall “wow” factor.

The result is a theme that is not only visually engaging but also emotionally impactful, creating a memorable experience that honors student success while celebrating the university community.

Introduction:

The “Milestones Unlocked” Commencement event was elevated through thoughtful presentation, intentional design, and a cohesive use of space that brought the theme to life. Every detail—from décor to service style—was carefully curated to enhance the guest experience and reinforce the celebratory nature of the event. The use of Manhattan University colors, branded elements, and creative food presentation ensured a visually engaging and memorable atmosphere. Combined with a well-planned layout and efficient service, these elements worked together to create a dynamic environment that reflected both the significance of the occasion and the identity of the university.

Essay:

The presentation strategy for the “Milestones Unlocked” Commencement event was carefully designed to enhance both the visual appeal and overall guest experience. The theme was consistently carried through in all décor and decorations, creating a cohesive and immersive atmosphere. Large illuminated “MU” letters were displayed across campus, reinforcing both the Milestones Unlocked theme and Manhattan University identity. The university’s colors were prominently featured throughout the space, including in table-scape elements such as centerpieces, napkin folds, and additional decorative accents.

The event space was intentionally designed to enhance the atmosphere and promote efficient guest flow. A central buffet setup allowed guests to move freely through the Quad, exploring a wide variety of menu offerings while minimizing congestion. Dedicated stations were also designated for dietary-specific options, ensuring both safety and inclusivity by reducing the risk of cross-contamination.

The buffet-style service was selected to accommodate the large volume of attendees while maintaining quality and efficiency. Food presentation was elevated with layered displays that added depth, color, and visual interest, contributing to an attractive and engaging setup.

Together, these elements created a cohesive and memorable environment, where presentation, service, and design all worked in harmony to bring the “Milestones Unlocked” theme to life.

Introduction:

The “Milestones Unlocked” Commencement 2025 event successfully delivered on its goals through strong collaboration, thoughtful planning, and intentional execution. Beyond creating a memorable guest experience, the event fostered a sense of unity, pride, and shared accomplishment among Manhattan University graduates, families, and staff. Positive feedback from attendees highlighted the strength of the theme and overall experience. Collaboration with internal teams and external partners further enhanced the event’s reach and impact, while sustainability efforts minimized waste. Together, these elements demonstrate how the event not only met expectations, but elevated the standard for what a commencement celebration can achieve.

Essay:

The “Milestones Unlocked” Commencement 2025 event clearly achieved its goals, as demonstrated through overwhelmingly positive feedback from graduates, families, and staff. Attendees praised the theme for its meaningful message—highlighting that while each student has their own unique journey, everyone is united in “unlocking” this milestone together. This shared language created a powerful sense of pride, connection, and collective accomplishment, reinforcing the emotional impact of the event.

Collaboration played a key role in the event’s success. Members from other Gourmet Dining accounts attended the event to observe best practices, further strengthening cross-campus collaboration and knowledge sharing. This engagement reflects a commitment to continuous improvement and industry leadership.

Sustainability was also a key consideration in the event’s design and execution. Through careful planning, accurate forecasting, and intentional menu execution, the event achieved minimal food waste reflecting both efficiency and respect for resources.

The overall “wow” factor was not dependent on budget, but on thoughtful design and execution. From cohesive branding and immersive décor to efficient service and elevated presentation, every element worked together to create a seamless and impactful experience. The result was a meaningful, sustainable, and highly successful event that exceeded expectations and left a lasting impression on all who attended.

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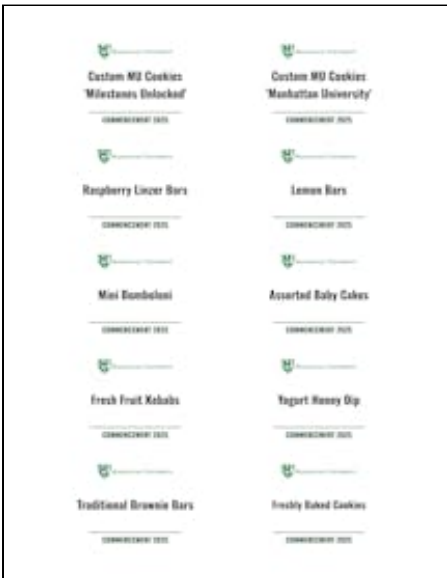
MU-Letters-Mil... 3.7 MiB



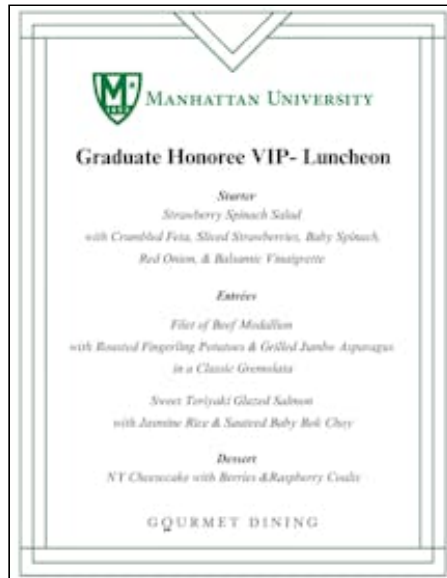
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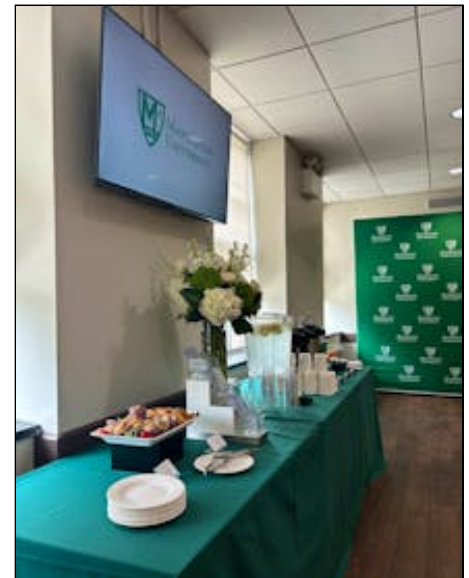
Manhattan-Uni... 1.7 MiB



Manhattan-Uni... 1.6 MiB



Graduate Hono... 254 KiB



Commencemen...3.2 MiB



Commencment... 3.5 MiB



Commencment... 3.4 MiB



Commencemen...3.3 MiB



Commencemen...3.7 MiB



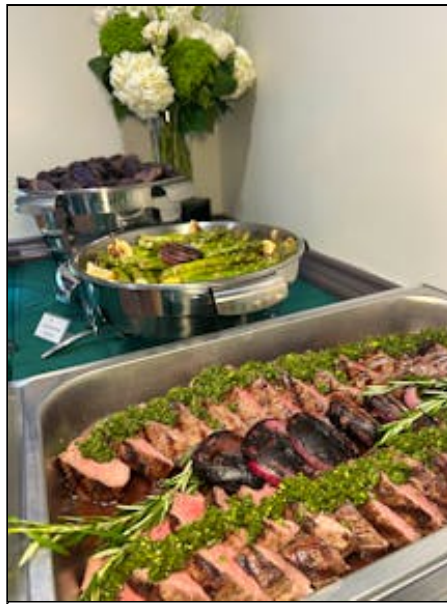
Commencemen...3.1 MiB



Commencemen...3.9 MiB



Commencemen...3.1 MiB



Commencemen...3.9 MiB



Commencemen...3.0 MiB



Commencemen...4.2 MiB



MU-Letters-Mil... 3.2 MiB



Zaros-Commen... 525 KiB



Commencemen...4.7 MiB



Attachment name

<https://youtube.com/sh...>