

Lynn Cody



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Entry details

Entry Name: Lobster Night 40th Anniversary

Institution Name: Boston University

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Introduction:

The Lobster Night menu celebrated 40 years of tradition by showcasing New England's culinary identity and highlighting BU Dining's long-standing regional partnerships. Students enjoyed steamed lobster from Gloucester, MA, along with local corn and buttered New England potatoes sourced locally through the Boston Food Hub. To ensure the event was inclusive, the menu also featured plant-based and gluten-free items like vegan corn chowder for guests with allergies or dietary preferences. Lobster Night is a rite of passage for all Boston University students, and the 40th anniversary continued that tradition of welcoming students to campus with a quintessential taste of Boston.

Essay:

The 40th anniversary Lobster Night menu was crafted to celebrate New England flavors while showcasing Dining's commitment to local purchasing. The highlight was steamed lobster sourced from Cape Ann Lobstermen, harvested just off the Boston coast. Complementary sides such as corn on the cob, warm maple-sage root vegetables, buttered potatoes, and soups including vegan corn chowder and butternut squash bisque, reflected the region's seasonal ingredients. Desserts like Vermont maple bread pudding and Maine blueberry cobbler further emphasized New England's agricultural roots and demonstrated our continued partnership with Boston Food Hub and other regional producers.

Inclusivity remained central to the celebration, ensuring every student could enjoy this longstanding BU tradition. Vegan lobster mushroom mac and cheese and vegan corn chowder offered plant-based options that aligned with the event theme, while the dedicated gluten-free station featured certified-humane apple-brined chicken from Murray's Family Farm to support students with dietary restrictions. As the highest-attended residential event of the year, the 40th anniversary Lobster Night welcomed guests across all three dining halls and featured service of over 10,000 lobsters. Through careful planning and thoughtful menu design, BU Dining delivered a memorable large-scale experience that reinforced why Lobster Night remains one of campus' most beloved traditions.

Introduction:

Lobster Night, established in 1985, is one of Boston University's longest-standing dining traditions, and the 40th anniversary brought renewed energy to the event. While rooted in history, the event continues to evolve to meet the expectations of today's students. The event celebrates New England's coastal identity while honoring a nearly four-decade legacy within campus dining. Themed balloon sculptures and a custom step-and-repeat created Instagram-worthy photo opportunities, while student interns and the campus comfort dog dressed in lobster costumes to delight the crowds. The event was intentionally designed to uphold tradition while delivering a highly engaging dining experience.

Essay:

The theme was reinforced across all residential dining halls with nautical decor, regional sourcing signage, and fun engagement opportunities. Students were greeted by custom balloon arches and a step-and-repeat featuring the 40th anniversary branding to help generate excitement from the moment they arrived, while themed music and engagement from campus leadership helped amplify the festive atmosphere. Interns and the campus comfort dog, Bean, dressed in lobster costumes encouraging students to take photos to commemorate the evening.

Multiple service methods were implemented to support volume and accessibility. The Lobster Night menu was served from several stations allowing us to serve students quickly, and efficiently without compromising food quality and safety standards. Plant-based and gluten-free options were clearly marked and integrated into the main service area for accessibility. Cracking stations offered action-style engagement with staff assisting students who were enjoying their first lobster!

Because Lobster Night is the highest attended event of the year, execution focused heavily on flow and efficiency. Leadership volunteers and marketing interns greeted students in line, handed out lobster swag, and kept the energy high. The intentional blend of tradition, operational efficiency, and engagement created a memorable event that fully embraced the 40-year milestone.

Introduction:

Marketing for the 40th anniversary of Lobster Night focused on celebrating the event's legacy while building excitement. Cohesive branding across social media, digital signage, email, and on-site materials created a recognizable visual identity, while a playful plush lobster scavenger hunt added an element of surprise and encouraged early engagement. Together, these efforts generated significant buzz and contributed to record-breaking attendance. By crafting a dynamic, multi-layered marketing approach, Lobster Night further established itself as one of the most highly anticipated events on campus.

Essay:

The marketing strategy for the 40th anniversary of Lobster Night was designed to build anticipation for one of campus dining's most iconic traditions. Promotional materials highlighted the milestone year and aimed to spark student excitement. Social media played a central role, with themed content like "lobster week weather forecast" and a highly engaging scavenger hunt in which ten plush lobsters were hidden across campus. Students who found them earned two skip-the-line passes, generating instant buzz and encouraging widespread participation.

The scavenger hunt became one of the most successful activations, driving students to follow Dining's social channels while increasing visibility for the event. Cohesive graphic design, coverage in the campus newsletter, BU

Today, frequent social posts, and digital displays across campus ensured the campaign was unified and broad-reaching. Social media interns further energized the promotion by roaming campus in lobster costumes, sharing teasers, and promoting giveaways like lobster-themed T-shirts.

On the night of the event, playful nautical decorations, including themed balloons and photo-ready step-and-repeats, helped create a festive atmosphere that matched the excitement built throughout the week. Student feedback collected during the event will continue to inform future improvements, supporting Lobster Night's ongoing growth as a beloved campus tradition.

Introduction:

Lobster Night's 40th anniversary concluded as the most successful campus event of the year, achieving its goals of high attendance, student engagement, and seamless operational execution. More than 10,000 lobsters were served with the support of the entire BU Dining team, 75 campus leader volunteers, and student employees. Sustainability was intentionally embedded into the event through local sourcing, compostable serviceware, and full composting of lobster shells and waste, highlighting our commitment to environmental stewardship even for large-scale events. Lobster Night delivered a truly meaningful experience for the entire campus community.

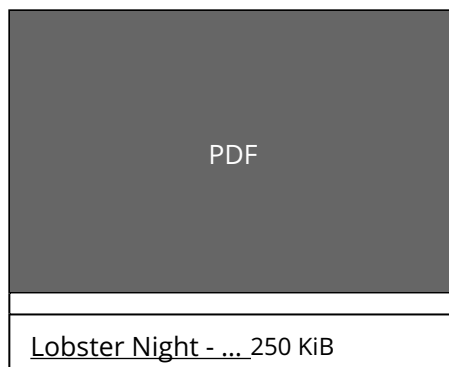
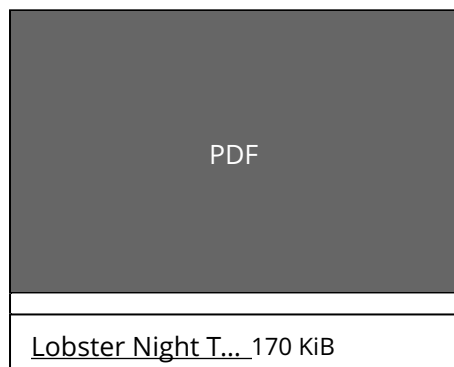
Essay:

The 40th anniversary of Lobster Night successfully achieved its goals across engagement, sustainability, and campus impact. More than 10,000 lobsters were served to students across three dining halls, making it the highest attended dining event of the year. Achieving success at this scale required extensive planning, detailed production coordination, and collaboration that not only resulted in a fantastic event but helped strengthen relationships across campus.


Sustainability was intentionally integrated into the design and execution of Lobster Night. Lobster was sourced just miles off the coast of Boston, produce was sourced from local farms and producers, we eliminated plastic bibs, and all shells and food waste were composted through BU's existing composting program. These steps not only aligned the event with BU's broader sustainability commitments, they made Lobster Night the largest sustainably sourced meal of the year!

From the thoughtful décor to the high-energy environment created by staff and students, the evening reinforced BU Dining's commitment to the student experience. As BU Dining looks to continue (and enhance!) the Lobster Night tradition, insights gained from this milestone year will guide future events, positioning BU Dining to remain innovative, efficient, and an integral part of the student experience for years to come.

Log in to nacufs.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



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| Attachment name Lobster Night Highlight ... |
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