

Dining After Dark: Student Appreciation Party

Cal Poly

Introduction:

Cal Poly Campus Dining serves over 20,000 meals a day at more than 40 venues. To accomplish this, they employ more than 800 student associates, making them the majority of our workforce. Whether it's in the kitchen, in the dish room, the warehouse, with catering or elsewhere, they are the heart and soul of Campus Dining. To celebrate their contributions, Campus Dining hosted the first-ever Dining After Dark, Student Appreciation Party in June 2024 at 1901 Marketplace, which was closed just for associates to enjoy. Dining venues across campus were closed early to ensure that all associates could attend.

Essay:

Dining After Dark was hosted by Cal Poly Campus Dining in partnership with the Cal Poly Partners, Cal Poly Arts, Cal Poly Mustang Shop, Cal Poly Print and Copy, and Cal Poly Conference and Event Planning. Students were given tickets for a chance to win a variety of raffle prizes, including an electric bike, day passes to Six Flags, a Nintendo Switch bundle, a Bose Bluetooth speaker, a Spikeball set, Stanley Tumblers, \$50 Visa gift cards, AirPods, a Chick-fil-A cow plush toy, and more! Fun games were provided throughout the building for students to play, including giant Jenga, inflatable bowling, ladder ball, cornhole and others! Additional interactive activities included a table to make friendship bracelets, trivia hosted by local quizmaster Larry Peña, and a 360 Photo Booth. Ultimately, it wouldn't be a Campus Dining hosted event without food and drinks! Participants enjoyed Root Beer Floats and snacks. Citrus de Pollo Street Tacos, a Grain Salad with quinoa and kale,

Baja Chicken Finger Sandwiches, Roasted Garlic Hummus with Carrots and Fried Lavash Chips and Pork Spring Rolls with Lemongrass Potstickers!

Introduction:

To execute the theme of this event, great care was taken between the marketing and culinary team to ensure a great evening. The theme was focused around celebrating the student associates who work at Campus Dining. In doing so, we created a fun and engaging event with exciting games, prizes and food samples to be enjoyed throughout the evening.

Essay:

The Dining After Dark Student Appreciation Party was a success. The chefs and catering team prepared an exciting array of snacks and beverages, and the marketing team highlighted those unique features in their digital and print messaging leading up to the event, helping it become one of the best-attended events of the year. Due to its popularity, plans are already being made for a similar event in the future.

Introduction:

Once the theme of the Dining After Dark Student Appreciation Party was decided on, getting every participant to attend was the next goal. Nearly all of our 800+ student associates showed up, thanks to the creative marketing that occurred leading up to the date. The theme included a laid-back vibe to help student associates relax, let their hair down, and mingle. Music was played, and the food was complimentary to the theme, with fun finger foods, snacks and treats.

Essay:

The event was marketed through a plethora of media. Email newsletters and text messages went out weekly to remind associates. Social media posts were made, highlighting the types of food and prizes that would be there. Print signage was posted around campus, as well as at every employee break area and time clock for them to see during their shift. Lastly, word-of-mouth marketing was key. Supervisors and managers told their teams in the weeks leading up to the event.

Introduction:

Following the success of our inaugural student appreciation party, team morale and bonding has seen exponential growth. Managers and supervisors have reported smoother operations, developed a deeper understanding of operations and consistently great customer service.

Essay:

The Dining After Dark event sparked an abundance of positive feedback. Lasting relationships were created among attendees, which have blossomed both in and outside the work place. This event was unique due to its setup. To honor the hard work of our student associates and part-time workers, our full-time managerial and supervisor staff served them for the evening. This changing of roles was a fun and creative way to bond as a team, see things from a different perspective and truly appreciate the work everyone does to serve more than 20,000 people each day on campus.

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