

Elizabeth Brunet



vGDPZjDe

Entry details

Entry Name: Trending Tuesdays

Institution Name: Jones College

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Elizabeth Brunet - Area Marketing Manager

Email Address: elizabeth.brunet@sodexo.com

Phone Number: +16013498565

Address: PO Box 853

City: Ellisville

State: Mississippi

Zip Code: 39437

Country: United States of America

Introduction:

The Trending Tuesdays concept was brought to life in a Sodexo planning meeting for the spring semester at Jones College. While discussing student survey feedback and building an action plan, Executive Chef Chia "Andy" Wu brought forward an idea he had been developing, bringing viral dishes into the dining hall.

The team immediately saw the potential to give students more of the variety they asked for, while also giving them the shared experience with these now internet-famous dishes. Chef Wu built each menu intentionally, making sure each dish was distinctly unique while also considering student preferences and dietary restrictions.

Essay:

Each Tuesday, the dining hall's Exhibition Station featured a new trending recipe. Features included Baked Feta Pasta, Flamin' Hot Boudin Balls, Fried Chicken "Lollipops", and Little Mac Sliders.

We kicked off the Baked Feta Pasta, made with simple whole ingredients. Chefs roasted blocks of feta with cherry tomatoes and olive oil, blended to create a creamy "instant sauce" then folded with pasta and fresh basil.

Chef Wu leaned into the Flamin' Hot Cheeto trend by pairing it with house-made pork boudin rolled into spheres, coated in Cheetos, and fried crisp. Boudin sausage consists of cooked pork and rice dressing stuffed in its natural casing. A creamy cheese dipping sauce was provided to balance out heat.

The chicken “lollipops” were given an Asian twist on a traditional southern pairing. Served with a Thai sweet chili sauce and a fresh slaw with citrus, ginger and crunchy vegetables.

The Little Mac Sliders were a recognizable option compared to the more adventurous features. A take on a well-known classic with beef patties, pickles, lettuce and creamy thousand island dressing.

Menus were built for inclusivity by offering gluten-free and vegetarian options. Each recipe was scaled for high-volume service with clear prep methods and food-safety standards.

Introduction:

Trending Tuesdays changed the entire vibe of the dining hall’s Exhibition Station. By not integrating the series into the main service line and instead adding support to ease flow and increase engagement, we created a destination students naturally gravitated toward first. Stations were set up so students could quickly see the signage and the finished dish at a glance. We also gave them the option to customize their meals, creating more opportunities for interaction and engagement.

Essay:

The Exhibition Station drove the entire experience. We used clear signage and made sure to have the finished dish on display, allowing students to instantly recognize what was being served.

We positioned multiple team members at the station to serve while also answering questions and collecting feedback. The station was reset weekly to reflect the new feature. Main dishes were plated and served by our team, with a self-serve garnish station that included items like sriracha, green onions, parmesan, and burger toppings, allowing students to customize their meal.

The chicken lollipops were prepared using a technique called “Frenching,” where the meat is pushed down the drumstick to create a handle. Several guests did double-takes as the drumsticks stood upright in a circular display.

Utilizing the extra space provided at the Exhibition Station set this event apart. It allowed students to interact freely; expressing their favorites and offering new menu ideas. The familiarity of the trending recipes combined with our team’s genuine interest in our guests’ wants and needs, created an environment that the students wanted to be a part of; the strategic execution of the series turned bringing more variety into a collaborative experience.

Introduction:

The strategy behind promoting Trending Tuesdays was built around dining’s “We Heard You” campaign. We wanted students to see that their feedback mattered and that it was actually being used to shape their dining experience. Tying that message to familiar online trends helped us build interest and gave students something to look forward to each week.

We kept the promotional graphics consistent throughout all campus communications, so the series became instantly recognizable. We went with a modern clean design that held the focus on the featured dish for the week; simple color shifts made menu updates easy to spot.

Essay:

Two weeks before launch, we began teasing the series through social media posts and stories, digital screens, flyers, client deliverables, and our January newsletter. We promoted through word-of-mouth at events leading up to the launch. This allowed us to connect directly with students and share our excitement.

Support from Jones College Student Affairs played a key role in the promotion. Trending Tuesdays was included in recurring “This Week at Jones” emails. Event recaps were shared with their 22K social media followers, extending our reach.

The results reflected that impact. Compared to February 2024, online engagements and impressions rose 44% and 80%, respectively. We also saw a 13% boost in Tuesday's guest count, averaging 632 guests throughout the series.

We included intentional engagement moments to collect real-time student feedback. "I kept seeing this feta pasta all over TikTok, and now I get to try it!" Bryce Burell, freshman. "I almost didn't try the boudin. I'm glad I did, this stuff is amazing!" Landon Pool, sophomore.

We gained national recognition when our event article was picked up by Food Service Director Online Magazine and featured prominently on their homepage. This significantly increased visibility, as they have 200K+ page views a month.

Introduction:

Trending Tuesdays ended up doing exactly what we hoped it would. It increased participation, got students more engaged, and changed how they interacted with the dining hall. What started as a weekly feature quickly turned into something students were showing up for on purpose.

Essay:

The impact was evident in both performance metrics and student response. Tuesday attendance increased from 556 guests prior to launch to an average of 632 during the series. That momentum carried into March, with Tuesday attendance averaging 612, remaining above pre-launch levels.

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



Baked Feta 2.JPG 2.6 MiB



Baked Feta1.JPG 2.5 MiB



Chicken Lollipo... 725 KiB



Flamin Hot Bou... 1.8 MiB



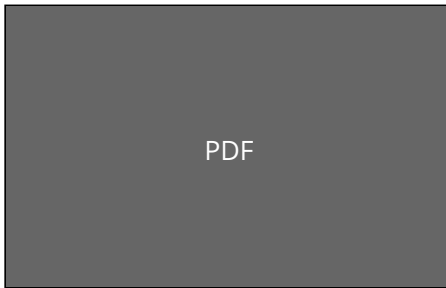
Lil Mac Sliders.J... 2.6 MiB



Pre_roasting ba... 973 KiB



Trending Tuesd... 792 KiB



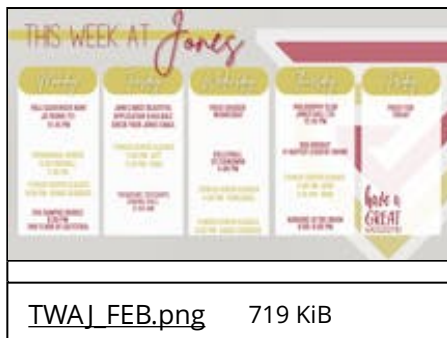
Jones JanFeb 25... 2.2 MiB



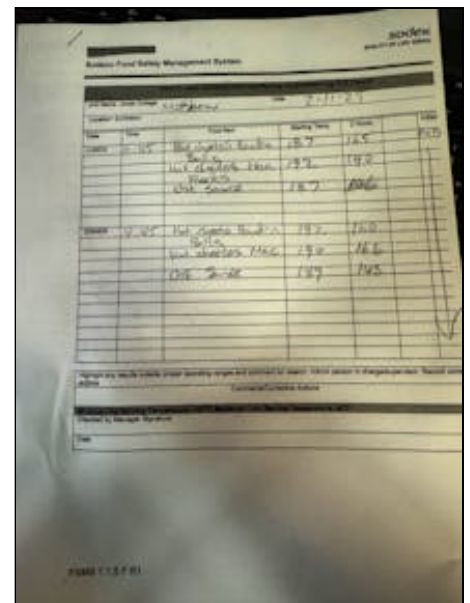
Jones Social Me... 479 KiB



Jones College S... 503 KiB



TWAJ_FEB.png 719 KiB



TEMPlogBoudin...2.1 MiB



sodexosocialme...2.4 MiB



sodexosocialme...2.4 MiB



sodexosocialme...3.6 MiB



boudin prep.jpg 381 KiB



Attachment name
Food Service Director O...

<https://www.foodservic...>



Attachment name
Patch article_Trending T...

<https://patch.com/missi...>