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Entry details

Entry Name: Breakfast A-Brod

Institution Name: Old Dominion University

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Introduction:

At Old Dominion University, Breakfast-A-Brod was created to foster global connection among students, many traveling thousands of miles to join our campus community. With 52% of our student body from underrepresented ethnic groups and international students representing 91 countries, we designed a menu honoring their cultures, reflecting global dining trends, and offering a comforting taste of home during a season when many cannot travel. Broderick Dining Commons transformed into an airport, with stations reimaged as gates highlighting each dish's origin. These global "departures" featured curated menus showcasing breakfast traditions from around the world across all meal periods.

Essay:

Our international itinerary began with breakfast, featuring vibrant, nutrient-forward flavors reflecting today's focus on wellness and global inspiration. Guests enjoyed Brazilian açaí bowls filled with deep color and layered textures, a protein-rich Scandinavian smoked salmon display accented with bright garnishes, and Huevos Rancheros featuring bold Mexican flavors with creamy eggs, crisp tortillas, and salsa.

As lunchtime departures were announced, the experience shifted to European and Asian destinations. French pastries, including chocolate croissants, crepes, and baguette slices with jam delivered flaky and sweet elements reminiscent of a Parisian café experience. Japanese-inspired Tamago Sushi introduced students to umami-rich

flavors and precise knife technique, while Shrimp & Grits with Creole Sauce reimaged a Southern American classic. The Donut Burger added a playful twist and became a student favorite in our poll.

For the final “arrival,” the menu returned to the USA with our students’ classic favorites: scrambled eggs, hash browns, bacon, turkey sausage, donut holes, and Chicken n’ Waffles. Breakfast pizzas and signature refreshers, including a Shirley Temple and ODU-inspired “Blue Reign,” completed the journey. The True Balance Station ensured allergy-inclusivity was a priority by offering breakfast options free of the top nine allergens, allowing all students to participate fully in the event.

Introduction:

Inspired by our students’ nickname for Broderick Dining Commons, “Brod,” Breakfast A-Brod used a playful twist on words to invite students on a global journey without leaving campus. Created to reflect the diverse cultural identities that shape our community, the event offered students a sense of home and familiarity during a season when many cannot travel or may feel the absence of family traditions. By designing an experience that brought international destinations to life, we aimed to foster belonging, celebrate cultural pride, and invite students to explore our global community through food and atmosphere.

Essay:

Based on student feedback, including the success of the university’s “All Around the World” homecoming theme and continued requests for more culturally diverse food options, we shaped our creative direction to reflect these interests and ensure the event resonated with the campus community. Brod was reimaged as an airport, complete with gates, concourses, flight information, flight crew, and airline-style branding. Each station functioned as a “gate,” featuring signage with the gate number, departure time, destination, and themed menu items. A central digital flight board divided Brod into Concourse A and B, with graphics shifting color palettes throughout the day to reflect each segment of the journey.

Blue and green accents, globes, and international visuals created continuity as stations transitioned between cuisines. Hand-illustrated passport-style stamps highlighted dish origins, enhancing the bespoke design. Staff served as flight crew, with hosts dressed as attendants, others wearing captain wings. Action stations featured fresh preparation and personalization, while six visiting vendors acted as “airport shop stops” with samples and giveaways. The patio’s “Monarch VIP Lounge,” with heated tents, offered themed activities and a relaxed experience that mimicked exclusive airport lounges.

Introduction:

Breakfast A-Brod created a fully cohesive airport inspired immersive experience. Each touchpoint, from the earliest promotional teasers to the “now boarding” announcements, supported the theme of global connections through food. Hand-illustrated designs, intentional messaging, and interactive marketing elevated the concept, creating a memorable atmosphere that resonated deeply with students.

Essay:

To build anticipation and communicate the concept, we developed a cohesive visual system inspired by global travel. Hand-illustrated graphics featured airplane windows with skies shifting from sunrise to night, paired with menu items for each time of day. Distinct color palettes reinforced the day’s progression and helped students identify “boarding times,” while the “Gate D5” boarding pass motif tied to the event date (December 5) and echoed airport signage. We used a multi-media approach and cross-departmental collaboration to ensure campus-wide visibility. Social media teasers, day-of graphics, and recap videos built momentum online, while print collateral, vendor signage, concourse labels, and digital slides reinforced awareness across campus.

All nine stations were reimaged as an airport gate with digital screens displaying departure times, destinations, and menus. Hand-illustrated passport stamps highlighted dish origins, and directional signage maintained thematic consistency. Interactive elements enhanced engagement as students decorated and threw paper airplanes and

marked travel destinations on a world map. Vendor stations acted as “airport shops,” offering samples and giveaways between gates.

Throughout the day, we gathered feedback via social media polls and in-person surveys. Students highlighted the graphics, immersive branding, and interactivity as key strengths, reinforcing the event’s cohesive, polished, and memorable impact.

Introduction:

The success of Breakfast A-Brod was made possible through the collaborative efforts across our dining, student, and operations teams. This collective effort ensured the event ran smoothly, maintained an exceptional level of hospitality, and created an enhanced experience for all attendees.

Essay:

Student involvement played a crucial role in the event’s execution. Our student interns helped staff stations, supported guest interaction, and contributed to the lively, travel themed environment that defined the day. Their energy and presence helped create a welcoming, peer driven atmosphere that students responded to throughout the event.

Behind the scenes, our chefs and dining team managed the complex turnover of multiple internationally inspired dishes across four meal periods, including extending service until 11 p.m. for the late-night breakfast. Their coordination, timing, and attention to detail ensured that each “destination” was fully realized while maintaining high food quality and service consistency. Our hostesses further elevated the experience by welcoming guests in flight attendant attire, helping set the tone from the moment students arrived. Housekeeping staff also played a critical role, rearranging furniture between meal periods to accommodate station changes, vendor setups, and activity areas.

The event ultimately welcomed 2,675 guests, demonstrating strong campus interest and confirming that the goals of engagement, cultural representation, and student experience were met. From staffing collaboration to operational execution, Breakfast A-Brod delivered a cohesive and memorable experience that showcased teamwork at every level.

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