

**Monroe College Holds 13th Annual “America’s Best High School Chef”
Competition for Aspiring Chefs and Pâtissiers**

BRONX, NY, April 6, 2022 – [Monroe College](https://www.monroecollege.edu), a national leader in educating first-generation and international students, recently opened the doors to its Culinary Arts Center on the New Rochelle campus to welcome participants attending its annual “America’s Best High School Chef” competition.

This popular annual event, which has separate culinary and pastry tracks, attracts a talented group of future chefs and pâtissiers, each one eager to demonstrate their skills and hopefully win a generous scholarship to attend Monroe’s Culinary Institute of New York (CINY) after high school graduation.

This year’s event marked a return to in-person competition. First introduced in 2008, the event was on hiatus in 2020 and held virtually last year.

This year’s competitors were extraordinarily talented. All who participated impressed the judges with their creativity, knowledge, and undeniable skills. CINY’s accomplished faculty, led by Dean Frank Costantino, served as the judging panel.

The College warmly congratulates the top scorers on their wonderful achievement and thanks all of the participants and their coaches for their terrific work.

The first place winners -- Melina Sosa-Franco (culinary track) from Food and Finance High School and Vanessa Ruiz (pastry track) from East Valley Institute of Technology – each won FULL scholarships to continue their education at Monroe. The second and third place winners each won partial scholarships. Congratulations to all!

Culinary Track

- First place: Melina Sosa-Franco (Food and Finance High School / New York City)
- Second place: Humza Hussain (Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Milliken Technical Center / West Sayville, NY)
- Third place: Tatiana Torres (Nassau BOCES, Joseph M. Barry Career & Technical Education Center / Westbury, NY)

Pastry Track

- First place: Vanessa Ruiz (East Valley Institute of Technology / Mesa, AZ)
- Second place: Andrea Castillo (Food and Finance High School / New York City)

The culinary track of the ABHSC competition has multiple rounds. Participants start by demonstrating their core food preparation competencies in the Basic Skills Round. Students receiving the highest overall scores then progress to the semi-final Salad Basket Round, during which students must prepare a creative salad dish using a list of assigned ingredients. The top students from that round then move on to the Mystery Basket Round, requiring them to prepare two identical servings of an entrée comprised solely of the ingredients designated by the judges. The winner of that round earns the title of "America's Best High School Chef" and a full academic scholarship to attend Monroe.

The pastry track follows a different format. Interested students must first submit their signature dessert recipe in hopes of a coveted invitation to compete. The dish must include five key components: the main item, a sauce, a cookie or crisp item, chocolate, and fruit. During the contest, six invited participants then prepare two portions of their upscale, restaurant-quality dessert within a 60-minute timeframe. The winner of that round earns the title of "America's Best High School Pastry Chef" and a full academic scholarship to attend Monroe.

High school students and schools interested in participating next year are asked to contact Dean Frank Costantino for more information at fcostantino@monroecollege.edu.

ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in educating first-generation and international students. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, and the recognition it has received nationally for its impact on students' social mobility.

Monroe educates more than 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from New York campuses in the Bronx and New Rochelle, as well as in the Caribbean nation of St. Lucia. Students may also pursue degree programs through Monroe Online.

Programs are offered through Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through its King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.

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