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ECU plans to trim top jobs

- Expecting less state funding from the General Assembly for the next two years, officials at ECU have been planning for a year to trim for administrative positions.

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

Officials at East Carolina are continuing with plans to cut administrative and executive positions at the university in response to state funding cuts and the goals of the ECU Board of Trustees.

Earlier this week, University of North Carolina System President Erskine Bowles met with the chancellors of the 16 UNC universities to discuss plans to make administrative cuts.

Expecting less state funding from the General Assembly for the next two years, officials at ECU have been planning for a year to trim administrative positions at the direction of both the UNC General Administration and the ECU Board of Trustees, said Kevin Seitz, vice chancellor for administration and finance.

About $9 million of the total $19 million reduction in funding from the state will come from administrative positions and centers and institutes.

ECU’s exact plans for those trims are under review by the UNC General Administration, as are the plans from all other public universities in the state, Seitz said.

See CUTS, A9
The $19 million from the General Assembly cuts into four categories: tuition waivers, specific programs designated by the state, administrative cuts and continuation funding that pays for things such as inflation in electricity bills and increased library costs at ECU.

"We don't have the final numbers for administrative cuts, but it will be one of the most significant areas," Seitz said. "It is what Erskine wants from a GA perspective and what the Board of Trustees wants."

Since ECU has been planning for these cuts for a year, officials believe that they will be able to make the cuts without having to lay off permanent workers, though some fixed-term contracts may not be renewed, Seitz said.

"We are hoping that we are going to be able to make this without having to have anyone lose their position," he said.

"We are trying to make it with vacant positions, which we have been saving up for a year now."

Since Chancellor Steve Ballard joined ECU five years ago, executive and administrative jobs have decreased by 35.6 percent, total employment has increased by 18 percent, and student enrollment has increased by 21.6 percent.

Officials at ECU have increased funding that directly contributes to the academic core missions of the university for things such as instruction, research, academic support and financial aid by 41.5 percent during the last five years.

"ECU has never had the luxury of administrative excess," Ballard wrote in a note on ECU's Web site in response to accusations of administrative bloat in the UNC system.

"Over the last year, we cut administrative positions first, with the result that only 2 percent of our total budget cut came from the academic core."

UNC General Administration is reviewing plans submitted by the 16 campuses to cut administrative positions and will be in contact with ECU officials regarding the future of those positions, Seitz said.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.
Greenville is blooming with Pirate pride

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, September 02, 2009

Much of the city is going Pirate crazy in advance of the East Carolina University football season opener against Appalachian State on Saturday.

Purple and gold blooms will dot flower beds throughout downtown following an effort by nonprofit revitalization organization Uptown Greenville.

Don Edwards, owner of University Book Exchange and an Uptown Greenville board member, said the project is a perfect example of the public/private partnerships that can be employed to improve downtown.

“We've had some crime downtown, and we need to get things going the right direction again,” he said.

Edwards and fellow board member Albie McLawhorn met with city public works staff about the planters in the area and were told there was no money to replace the plants. They were undeterred.

“We've got 6,000 people coming in for the Appalachian State game, Freeboot Friday, and before too much longer, the North Carolina League of Municipalities conference,” Edwards said. “This gets some beautiful color in the planters.”

First Citizens Bank was the first to pitch in, donating $500. Lowe's Home Improvement sold them purple salvia plants at half price — which Edwards said will hold their color throughout football season — and took a dollar off the unit cost for pine straw.

“It's hard for the city to do this,” Edwards said of the bargaining. “We're a nonprofit. They'd have to issue contracts for bidding.”

Worthington Farms fetched some yellow lantanas from Wilmington early in the process but held off on pricing.

In the end, they agreed to sell Uptown Greenville the 140 plants for $175 — which was about all they had left once Lowe's was paid.

“We got well over $1,000 worth of plants for $500,” Edwards boasted. “It's just a compelling community project. And we got it done in a week.”

Public Works staff finished packing the spirited planters Wednesday afternoon.

Now McLawhorn is organizing volunteers from Uptown Greenville to maintain the freshly-sewn flower beds.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9566.

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Plan ahead for Saturday’s football traffic

The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, September 02, 2009

Greenville residents not already aware of East Carolina University’s 2009 season-opening football game Saturday against Appalachian State will find out about it as soon as they head into traffic.

The 12:06 p.m. game at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium is sold out and 43,000 fans are expected to attend.

Traffic is expected to be extremely heavy around the stadium, particularly on Charles Boulevard and East 14th Street, a Greenville police traffic safety unit officer said.

ECU parking lots will open at 8 a.m. Saturday and motorists not traveling to the game should try to avoid streets around the stadium and be aware of some other traffic and parking changes this year that might affect traffic flow around West Fifth Street as well, according to ECU and Greenville police bulletins.

The Greenville Police Department and the State Highway Patrol will manage traffic along the routes Saturday. Beginning three hours prior to the game and one and a half hours after, motorists not traveling to the game should try to avoid Charles Boulevard, 14th Street, Elm Street and Greenville Boulevard, police Cpl. R.S. Johnson said.

In a major change this year, 14th Street will be closed from Charles Boulevard to College Hill Drive and Berkeley Road during game times, Johnson said.

Parking on both sides of West 14th Street from Elm Street to Berkley Road will be by visible permit only, and no traffic will allowed on West 14th between those two streets without a parking pass, Johnson said.

After the game, motorists will find the following restrictions:

No through traffic will be allowed on West 14th Street from Elm Street. Traffic exiting the C.M. Eppes parking lot will be diverted west in a lane on 14th Street and turn right on College Hill Drive to 10th Street.

All traffic exiting Berkley Road will be diverted east onto 14th Street and all three lanes will be eastbound; the left lane will turn left (north) at Elm Street, the center lane will flow east on 14th and cross Elm Street to Greenville Boulevard and the right lane will turn right (south) at Elm Street.

No traffic will be allowed west on 14th Street from Charles Boulevard.

Charles Boulevard will be closed to southbound traffic at 14th Street and diverted west on 14th Street toward Evans Street.

No traffic will be allowed north on Charles Boulevard from Greenville Boulevard. Traffic from Red Banks Road will be diverted right from Charles onto Greenville Boulevard.

Another new change in parking will affect traffic around the Brody School of Medicine.

Public parking will now be available at the Brody School parking lot, with shuttle bus service available to and from Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium for a $5 charge.

Construction of a new softball field next to Clark-LeClair Stadium will put an end to parking and tailgating on the grass field at that location for the entire season.
In addition, public parking at the Carol Belk Building across from the baseball/softball complex will now be reserved for Pirate Club members only.

Police asked that motorists be patient Saturday as officers work throughout the city to clear the traffic congestion, which normally lasts one to one and a half hours after games.
Letter: Recognize clinical nurse specialists

Wednesday, September 02, 2009

The week of Sept. 1-7 is the first annual celebration acknowledging the influence of approximately 72,000 clinical nurse specialists across the nation. CNS are licensed registered nurses who hold masters or doctorate degrees in nursing and who are experts in a specialized area of clinical practice. There are approximately 72,000 master’s or doctorally prepared CNSs in the United States, and at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, there are 15 CNSs prepared at the graduate level who work to enhance quality and patient safety systemwide.

CNS practice improves the health-care environment by positively influencing patient/client care outcomes, nurse performance standards and health-care organization goals. CNS create, monitor and evaluate cost-effective, evidence-based policies, procedures, protocols and best practice models and provide inter-professional, systemwide leadership. Examples of outcomes of CNS practice include reduced complications in hospitalized patients, increased quality and safety of patient care, reduced hospital costs and length of stays, improved pain management, increased patient satisfaction with nursing care, reduced frequency of ER visits, and improved nursing staff retention.

Nationally and locally CNSs contribute to the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities, and promote and advance the practice of nursing. This week is in recognition of their contribution to improving the safety and quality of patient care.

SUSAN A. WILLIAMS

Director, CNS concentration

ECU College of Nursing

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Entrepreneur developing new crab-processing way

ECU grad student eyes Washington for his company

By GREG KATSKI Community Editor
Published: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 2:22 AM EDT

Gabe Dough wants to make Washington the “core” of America’s crabbing industry.

His ambitious plan starts with his upstart, biotechnology-based crabbing company, Shure Foods.

Through experimental work with the company, Dough has been using proprietary materials, such as enzymes and proteins, to tweak the consistency of raw blue-crab meat and bind it into medallions and patties.

The company’s extraction and manipulation process is designed to reduce the end cost of producing the delicate blue-crab meat, Dough said.

Dough insists the process involves much more than "just gluing meat together."

The East Carolina University graduate student hopes his work will revolutionize the way crab meat is used in America.

"It’s a foundational product. You can do 1,000 things with it — bread, fry, grill, bake, broil," he said.

Currently, Shure Foods is marketing the product to area commercial-crabbing companies. Dough said, eventually, he would like to base the business at the Beaufort County Industrial Park.

The Beaufort County Committee of 100 has backed the business, Dough said.

"The people of Washington have been supportive," he said.

The budding businessman has already pitched his product to Tom Thompson, executive director of Beaufort County Economic Development. Thompson is excited about the job opportunities that a business like Shure Foods could provide for others, especially commercial fishermen and truck drivers.

"It’s a tremendous opportunity," Thompson said. "Any new product like this may turn out to be the next Microsoft."

Considering the overwhelming support and location, Dough called Washington the "ideal" place to start a business like Shure Foods.

"We feel like, as far as a core place to be, Washington is central to North Carolina," Dough said. "It is a great crab-producing region. We can draw crab to Washington from a lot of areas in North Carolina. Being on (U.S. Highway) 17, we can also bring crab from places even farther south than that."

Dough has been able to showcase his product through a $30,000 low-interest Company Inception Loan from the N.C. Biotechnology Center. Dough said the loan was received through ECU’s Entrepreneurial Initiative Program. The program is designed for graduate students looking to start their own businesses. Students, such as Dough, get help in drafting business plans from fellow graduate students. They also receive support from investors throughout the eastern North Carolina region.

The program takes on between three and five business projects a year. Dough’s project received attention from the program because of its potential impact on the region’s economy and crabbing...
industry.

"It could help bring back the crabbing industry in eastern North Carolina," said Marty Hackney, director of the Initiative program.

Dough, who was born and raised on Roanoke Island, has always had a vested interest in the industry. His uncle owned a fish house in Wanchese, and his best friend's father was a successful commercial fisherman.

"I've been hands-on with fishing," he said.

Dough, 33, graduated from ECU with a bachelor's degree in geology in 2005. He started work on his new product between then and enrolling in graduate school at ECU in spring 2008.

Dough didn't dive into the project until getting positive feedback from a mentor and former owner of the Washington Crab & Oyster Co., Harold Stephenson.

"He said, 'I think you're on to something,'" Dough said.
UNC probe of fraternity party nears completion

BY JAY PRICE, Staff Writer

A university investigation of a party at the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity on the night that its chapter president was killed by a police officer in Randolph County will probably be complete within a few days, a UNC-Chapel Hill administrator said Wednesday.

Courtland Benjamin Smith, a junior biology major from Houston, dialed 911 from his speeding SUV as it passed through Guilford County early Aug. 23 and said that he was trying to kill himself, that he was armed with a pistol and that he had been drinking.

Archdale police officers stopped him on Interstate 85, and, according to a news release from the police department, one of them shot him after a confrontation. The State Bureau of Investigation is conducting an investigation, which is routine when there is a shooting by a police officer.

Smith was 21, so he could drink legally. A spokesman for the fraternity said he had last been seen at the chapter house about 12:30 a.m. It was nearly 4-1/2 hours later that he was shot.

After Chapel Hill police contacted university officials early Aug. 23 about the possibility that something had happened to Smith, Jennifer Levering, assistant dean of students for fraternity and sorority life, accompanied campus police to the fraternity house. She saw evidence indicating there had been a large party with alcohol, Winston Crisp, the associate dean of students, said, in an interview Wednesday.

Levering and the chairman of the Greek judicial board are handling the investigation, Crisp said, adding that that is the kind of routine check the university performs when it hears there may have been violations of laws or policies.

"This is not an investigation to determine whether something had gone on during the party that was related to Courtland's death," he said.

In this case, the investigation will focus on things such as whether there was underage drinking, which would be a violation of state law, university policy and Greek policy, Crisp said.

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BCAC to unveil newest exhibit

Show to feature graphic art from ECU and UNC-W

By KEVIN SCOTT CUTLER
Lifestyles & Features Editor
Published: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 2:22 AM EDT

The Beaufort County Arts Council unveils a new show Thursday, and it’s a first for the community.

The Graphic Art Exhibit features work from the art and design departments at East Carolina University and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, according to Joey Toler, executive director of the Beaufort County Arts Council.

The show includes mixed-media prints, lithographs, etchings, screen prints, letterpress, woodcuts, graphic design and book arts.

“This is our first exhibit focusing on graphic arts,” Toler said. “It includes faculty work, alumni work and graduate-student work.”

Approximately 40 pieces are featured in the show, including two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. The idea for the show came from the graphic arts/mixed-media category of the annual BCAC Fine Arts Show.

“Over the years, I’ve gotten to know a lot more about art, and I’ve met some very interesting graphic artists,” Toler said.

Those artists include Anne Brennan, who, as a graduate student at East Carolina University, was the juror for the Fine Arts Show in 2007. A piece by Brennan is included in the new show.

Joining forces with Toler in organizing the show are Michael Ehlbeck and Matthew Egan of ECU and Ned Irvine of UNC-W.

“I raised the idea with them and they liked it,” Toler said. “They’ve been invaluable in putting this show together.”

The Graphic Art Exhibit could pave the way for more shows in the future, Toler added.

“It really is a unique partnership for us,” he said. “I’d like to see us do more exhibits with ECU because they have such a remarkable school of art and design there. Also, it’s a unique collaboration between the two universities, one that doesn’t happen very often.”

The new exhibit also exposes local residents to a different art form, according to Toler.
“Our real goal of doing this is to introduce a new kind of medium to Beaufort County and our arts patrons here,” he said. “It’s different, it’s unique, it’s a little bit provocative. It’s going to make for a very strong exhibit.”

The Graphic Art Exhibit officially opens to the public with a reception Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Washington Civic Center Gallery. Paul Cyr, executive chef at ECU, will cater the event, and special musical entertainment will be provided by Chris Nappi.

The show will run through Oct. 13. Gallery hours are Tuesdays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is occasionally closed for private functions; call 252-946-2504 to confirm hours of operation.
Under the Dome:
Published: Sep 03, 2009 02:00 AM
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Bowles insisted on full disclosure by Easley

When the UNC Board of Governors was vetting the details of Mary Easley’s new job and big raise at N.C. State University last year, UNC system President Erskine Bowles had conversations with both the first lady and her husband.

Bowles, who met this week with reporters and editors at The News & Observer, said he had been skeptical of the new job, which has since become entangled in a federal investigation into Mike Easley, the former governor. Bowles said he told James Oblinger, then the NCSU chancellor, that he would have to "justify every single dollar or we would not approve it."

At one point during the process, Bowles said Oblinger had given up trying to persuade Bowles and the board to approve the deal. But the chancellor later made another run at it, only to have the first lady balk at one of Bowles’ conditions: that all the documents supporting the $170,000 salary be made public.

"I called her and told her that," Bowles said. "She said she’d get back to me." She did, and the board approved the deal with Bowles’ blessing.

Bowles said he had also talked to the former governor at the time. "I told Governor Easley the same thing I just told you: That we were going to treat Mary Easley the same way we would treat everybody else."

The fallout from Mary Easley’s job has been significant. After interviews and e-mail messages showed that key advisers to the governor had pushed Oblinger to hire her in 2005 and that the chancellor was deeply involved, Oblinger resigned and Mary Easley was fired. McQueen Campbell, NCSU Board of Trustees chairman, also resigned.

Look at charter schools

The State Board of Education decided to start an ad hoc committee on charter schools that will look at the criteria used to approve new schools and how to close those that aren’t working.

A lot of the older charter schools are struggling, said state board Chairman William Harrison, while applicants for new charters have better proposals.

"We need to determine what to do with charter schools not performing, specific consequences and procedures," he said.

The state has capped the number of charter schools at 100.

The board wants to revive the notion of charters as incubators for ideas, and address the issue of de facto segregation of charter schools. Racially diverse districts, including Wake County, have charters that are nearly all white or all minority.

Help for Dole’s debt

Former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee has asked supporters to help former U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole retire more than $350,000 in campaign debt.

Dole, a Republican, ran up the debt in her unsuccessful attempt to fend off a challenge from Kay Hagan, a Democrat, in a bitterly fought campaign, reports the Atlantic magazine’s Politics
Huckabee's message may be a move to win backing from Bob and Elizabeth Dole for a presidential run. He made the plea in an e-mail message, asking supporters to pledge online, the blog reports. He attributes Dole's loss to huge spending by the Democratic Party, President Barack Obama's campaign and big voter turnout in early voting.

By staff writers Steve Riley, Lynn Bonner and Benjamin Niolet
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Halted scholarship program leaves CFCC, UNCW students scrambling

General Assembly eliminated program in 2009-10 state budget

By Chelsea Kellner
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Published: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 at 5:39 p.m.

More than 500 local college students are scrambling to fund their education after last month’s last-minute axing of a scholarship program designed to help low-income students graduate from college debt-free.

About 300 students at Cape Fear Community College and 267 students at the University of North Carolina Wilmington who had been promised up to $4,000 a semester for two years will instead receive $2,000 this semester – and that’s all.

“The loss of this funding is very painful for these students and their families, as they are among our student population with the greatest financial need,” UNCW spokesperson Dana Fischetti said Wednesday. “This change may impact their ability to complete their higher education.”

The EARN scholarship program was only in its second year when the North Carolina General Assembly decided it was “unsustainable” and wrote it out of the 2009-10 budget passed in August.

The $16.2 million scholarship program awarded money to students whose family income was less than twice the national poverty rate. The idea was to help them get through college without needing student loans.

CFCC freshman Brandy Weatherspoon found out about the scholarship cut from her financial aid advisor Tuesday. She had been expecting the full $4,000 a semester for the next two years to help offset tuition. Now she will have to rely on student loans.

“It was a shock,” Weatherspoon said. “It would have helped our family a lot. We were depending on that.”

More than 13,700 students across the state lost funding because of the cut,
according to Steven Brooks, Executive Director of the State Education Assistance Authority, the state agency that helps administer student aid.

"I’m sure students are disappointed," Brooks said. "The timing is tough."

Financial aid awards start in January, while the state budget wasn’t passed until August as the General Assembly struggled to fill a huge budget deficit. Most grant and scholarship money for the year has already been awarded, leaving many EARN recipients with no choice but to get a loan to cover the difference.

"The reality of the situation is that even though the state says they encourage us to find replacement money, we just don’t have the funding," said CFCC Director of Financial Aid Jo-Ann Craig.

At CFCC, the school is working to complete all financial aid awards for fall before notifying students.

At UNCW, the neediest students may be eligible for tuition offset grants on a case-by-case basis. For the rest, financial aid officials are trying to cover the costs through institutional financial aid or other sources of state need-based aid.

State Rep. Danny McComas, R-Wilmington, called the program cut “short-sighted,” and said he plans to look into reviving it in the future.

“We need to prepare our workforce for the knowledge-based industries," McComas said. "By doing this, we are shooting ourselves in the foot."

Chelsea Kellner: 343-2070

On Twitter.com: @StarNewsOnline
BU dorm offers a study in luxury

By Tracy Jan, Globe Staff | September 2, 2009

From the 26th floor of Boston’s newest high-rise, residents are treated to a sweeping view encompassing the historic Bunker Hill monument, the gilded dome of the State House, the majestic Harbor Islands, and the jets alighting and ascending from the distant airport. Just below, sailboats and rowing shells silently glide along the Charles River.

Despite the million-dollar vista, this is not the penthouse suite of a four-star hotel or a luxury condominium in the Back Bay. It’s the common room of a Boston University dorm, perhaps the most opulent residence hall to ever grace the local college landscape. Name tags taped to students’ doors say it all: “Skyview from the Center of the BUUniverse.”

“Sometimes I miss the elevator because I’m too busy looking out the window,” said Rina Beyda, a junior from Los Angeles and one of just 14 students lucky enough to land a room on the 25th floor, the highest residential level.

The view is not the only amenity. So luxurious is the 960-bed dorm that parents’ jaws dropped in disbelief when they helped their children move in last week. The suites of singles and doubles, with elegantly furnished common rooms, large private baths, walk-in closets, and floor-length mirrors, resemble nothing like what older generations remember of their college housing - sterile cinder-block boxes with institutional bunk beds and a communal bathroom down the hall.

“Life is tough,” said Laurie Hanafin, as she pushed a large orange crate full of her daughter’s belongings into her sixth-floor suite. “I’m going back to college. If there’s a martini bar, I’m staying.”

No martini bar - after all, most residents are underage. But in addition to the panorama of the city skyline, students have access to a media lounge with a plasma TV for watching movies and playing video games.

Other amenities include soundproof piano rooms that allow students to practice without disturbing those studying in the 24-hour reading room, which is outfitted with plush adjustable furniture befitting a first-class airport lounge. The laundry room - with washers and dryers programmed to alert students via computer when they are available - overlooks the athletic field and stadium.

A trio of futuristic chandeliers hangs in the stairwell of the airy lobby. Newly potted lady-finger palms and creeping ficus fill giant stainless steel planters.

“Students want beauty, and they should have beauty,” Kenneth Elmore, BU’s dean of students, said during a tour of the dorm. With its hotel ambience, “the only thing we’re missing is music” - though he’s considering getting it piped in.

The completion of the glass-and-steel tower, known as Student Village II because it is the second residential tower to be built on the western reaches of campus, signifies BU’s decades-long transformation from a commuter school to a residential college. For the first time in recent memory, the university will be able to house all students who want to live on campus, nearly 80 percent of its 16,000 undergraduates; no one will be relegated to local hotels this year.
Some critics - jealous, perhaps - may question why BU bothered to erect such posh quarters to house a bunch of college students, and whether the new dorm represents another sign of coddling the young. Standards for college housing have risen significantly over the years, with Northeastern University and Emerson College also unveiling new luxe accommodations this fall.

BU's president, Robert Brown, says the upgrade is critical to the university's goal of someday housing 85 percent of its undergraduates on campus amid rising competition with apartment rentals all over the city. Moving more students into dorms also helps to ease town-gown tensions.

"You can't get a lot of upperclassmen who want to live in traditional dorms in their junior and senior years," Brown said. University master plans call for a third high-rise on the Student Village site, but Brown said it will be at least three years before the university would consider moving forward.

Until then, students looking for high-end quarters must enter the housing lottery and hope they draw a number low enough to qualify for the new dorm. Samantha Barbosa, the 25th senior in last spring's housing lottery, chose to shell out nearly $13,000 a semester for a 25th-floor apartment in the gleaming tower, nearly $5,000 more than she would have paid for a standard dorm room.

"I applied by myself because my friends were all too cheap to live here," said Barbosa, who is paying for the room with student loans. "For the past three years, I lived in the lowest-priced dorms. Being a senior, I've worked really hard and I figured I deserve to live in a place like this."

Some parents lament the day their children must move beyond the tangerine and mocha walls of the new dorm into the real world.

"I'm so happy to be leaving you in this place," Mimi Leahey-Nangle told her son as she gazed out at the Charles River while helping him unpack. "But after living like this, you graduate facing a terrible job market and having to live with rats in Brooklyn."

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