

WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY Alumni Newsletter

SUMMER 2009

SPECIAL COMMENCEMENT EDITION

alumni.wgu.edu



Accomplishment. You set your goal, and now you've completed it. It feels great, doesn't it? That feeling you get when you hang that diploma on your wall, or walk across the stage, or see your name scroll across your computer screen after watching the commencement online; that's the feeling of accomplishment.

WGU graduates come from many different walks of life, but they have one thing in common, a hard-earned degree. Most come from situations where a college lifestyle was simply not feasible at the "typical time". Perhaps you had children at an early age. Maybe you did not take school seriously and wanted time off, but found yourself still taking "time off" ten years later. Others found themselves earning high wages in full-time jobs without a college education and decided it was unnecessary. Or for some, you simply decided that a competency-based online education suited your lifestyle. Fortunately, WGU's innovative programs offer the tools these types of people needed when they made the decision to pursue higher education, regardless of their stage in life.

You now have your degree, either a Bachelors or a Masters. What's the next step for you? Will you continue on to another education program, take a vacation, or jump right back into your life reveling in your inordinate amounts of new-found free time? You've proven you can earn your degree. You've proven your competence. You've proven your intelligence. Now, perhaps it's

time to do something with it. WGU graduates have something else in common, drive. You were driven to earn your degree by something inside of you. Sure, you can say that it was because your promotion depended on it, or that your loved ones pushed you. While this may be true, there was something else that was revealed, your drive. Your job and loved ones were not submitting tasks and taking tests proving their knowledge of the subject areas. You earned this degree. Whether it was through implementing your real life work experience or hours of studying and practice, you did it. This drive brought you to your accomplishment.

Now that you're aware of the drive within you, what do you plan to do with it? Take that drive and give back. Give back to your family and friends, give back to your community, and give back to yourself. You started at WGU seeking something; perhaps it was a "piece of paper", skills, or enlightenment. Well, you've found it, and are now continuing forward, as a different person. You've grown as a person and a scholar, and are prepared for new chal-

lenges. Keep using that drive to continue growing, regardless of your age or point in life.

No one can ever take this away from you. Accomplishment.

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Graduate Spotlight: Justin Cracroft

Salt Lake City, Utah

Justin Cracroft started his higher education at Salt Lake Community College and finished with a Bachelor of Arts in Business at Southern Virginia University (SVU). He decided to pursue his master's degree from WGU in 2007. Justin completed his MBA in February 2009.

Justin's career in banking began shortly after September 11th. He developed a solid foundation in the industry which has opened doors to progressive advancement in the commercial lending field. He is currently the chief underwriter of SBA loans for AmericanWest Bank in Washington and Idaho, and Far West Bank (a division of AmericanWest Bank) in Utah. Aside from work, Justin is married and the father of three children. He says that his roles as a husband and father are the most fulfilling. "Raising three kids makes life a challenge, but it brings rewards without true measure that makes our lives satisfying."

When asked about his most fulfilling moments at WGU, Justin says, "It was passing my third of three MBA certification exams, which was truly the cherry on top of my two year experience that made the sacrifices all worth it. An equally rewarding experience was the preparation of my



capstone project. During those final weeks of my MBA, going through the process helped me to realize how deep my love for learning environments truly runs, so much so that my post-graduation plans now include pursuing a PhD in business disciplines and eventually transitioning into professorship at the university level."

Graduate Spotlight: Jose Gracia-Medrano

Camarillo, California

Jose Gracia-Medrano embarked on an accounting and finance career of 21 years based on a single accounting course he took at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 1975. Previously, Jose had served in the U.S. Navy, but medically retired due to service-related injuries. He successfully moved forward in an accounting career without a degree.

Unfortunately, Jose hit an obstacle he could not overcome with experience and competence. Between the certification requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and mounting pressure from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants to deny access to corporate accounting positions to anyone not having a CPA, he found his 20 years of experience negated. He says, "After 21 years, I find myself in the unenviable position of being employed at a company that has already laid off more than 33% of its workforce in the last 9 months, and not able to find another position at my current compensation. Without having a degree or CPA, it will be extremely difficult for me to get a position paying even half of what I currently earn. Graduating from WGU with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting allows me to begin my MBA program, which completes the 150-unit educational requirements for CPA certification. My plan is to complete my MBA, get my CPA certification and my Certified Management Accountant certification all before the

end of this year. I know now that I cannot achieve my life's ambitions without a degree."

For Jose, earning his college degree is a life-changing achievement. He says, "Not only will it make me eligible to compete for positions I couldn't realistically dream of competing for, but it will enable me to keep a promise I made to my now-deceased parents - to graduate from college. Fortunately for autodidacts like me, WGU provides the perfect opportunity to complete an accredited degree program for both my bachelor's degree and MBA, which will get my career back on track and running in high gear."



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Graduate Spotlight: Paula Gary-Crabtree

Youngsville, Louisiana

Paula Gary-Crabtree had always been an exceptional student. After high school, she attended a brick and mortar college for a few semesters. Unfortunately, she found herself unchallenged while paying an expensive tuition, and decided to stop. As the years rolled by, thoughts of a higher education floated in the back of Paula's mind. She knew she would not be satisfied until she earned a college degree.

In June of 2007, Paula was diagnosed with Graves Disease, an auto-immune deficiency that affects the thyroid, causing it to malfunction and overproduce certain hormones, which causes organs such as the heart to function much more rapidly. Without treatment, patients can die an early death of a heart attack. To fight her illness, Paula undertook radioactive iodine therapy, which led to a four day period of seclusion. During that time, Paula pondered about education, and decided to get moving.

In October 2007, Paula found WGU, and began her first semester in November. Paula says, "From the beginning, it was a completely different experience. I could never have accom-

plished so much at a regular university. Like many other WGU students, I juggled multiple obligations outside of school."

Paula received a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from WGU in March 2009. She will be the first of her parent's children to earn a bachelor's degree and will pursue an MBA degree with WGU.

Paula encourages other WGU students and graduates to keep moving forward and says, "There are many things in my life

that I could have allowed to prevent me from pursuing my dream. We are all living proof that if you set your mind to something, you can accomplish it. Never allow hardships to slow you down. Use them as motivation to keep going and persevere."



Graduate Spotlight: Kara Greer

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Kara Greer received her MBA degree in June 2009. She is the Facilities and Environmental Manager for one of Bridgestone's tire plants near Nashville, Tennessee. Kara received her Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from Washington University in St. Louis more than 20 years ago.



Kara Greer and son

Since then, she has been living a fulfilling life with her husband and six children.

About 15 years ago, Kara began entertaining the idea of pursuing an MBA, but things - marriage, children, work and a traveling husband - always kept her "from looking very hard."

Kara says, "Then I found Western Governors University. What a wonderful opportunity to learn completely at your convenience but still interact with instructors and students through the learning resources and mentor program."

Somehow, Kara was able to fit her MBA studies into her busy schedule of: raising her children, a daily 3:00 morning run, and working a full-time job. Fortunately, she had help from her husband and children. While she shared study lessons with her children, they did the same for her. She and her son Garrett, a fourth grade student, would discuss non-renewable natural resources, human capital, and other topics she studied for her MBA domains. Her son Joshua, a high school student, was an advanced honor freshman who had to complete a career portfolio. Kara teamed up with Josh, and they worked on his and hers together.

After graduation, Kara plans to learn American Sign Language, qualify for the Boston Marathon, and speak conversational Spanish. She may even pursue a teaching degree from WGU in 2011.

Graduate Spotlight: Sandra Edwards

Honolulu, Hawaii

Sandra Edwards was born with a love of reading and a gift for scoring well on exams. She spent most of her early school years in a state of semi-boredom, except when it came to music - band and piano specifically. While in 11th grade, she studied college handbooks until finding an institution that allowed her to apply with a minimal number of high school credits and a good ACT score. A summer school session later, Sandra found herself auditioning for the music program at Delta State University.

Before her parents could object, Sandra accumulated several scholarships to pay for the entire experience. At the age of 17, she began college as a piano major. Sandra says, "Four years later, I had two years of music courses, a failed marriage, and a beautiful baby to show for my time. I made a difficult choice that many other young women have; I decided to postpone college in order to raise my daughter. After a couple years struggling in little more than minimum wage jobs, I landed an entry level position as a secretary."

Fortunately, her company's management saw something special in Sandra and encouraged her to learn and grow as much as she wanted. She worked hard, made her way up the

corporate ladder into sales, and then changed companies, later becoming a manager.

Eventually Sandra attempted to go back to school, deciding on business rather than music, but found traditional schooling did not fit into her schedule. She says, "A few years ago, my



daughter graduated from college, triumphing over several daunting obstacles to finish her education. She inspired me to try, once again, to finish my degree." Sandra then found WGU.

Sandra received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from WGU in May 2009. She is currently the General Business Manager for Diebold's Pacific Islands Region. Sandra enjoys travel, sports, music, and cooking. She is married, has two children and one grandchild. As a new graduate, Sandra looks forward to dividing her free time between volunteering and learning to paint.

Graduate Spotlight: Roger Lindsay

Boise, Idaho



Roger Lindsay has been married for 20 years and is the father of three children, ranging from 11 to 19 years old. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Boise State University in 1994.

Shortly after completing his bachelor's degree, Roger became an engineer working in research and development on flash memory (used in digital cameras, MP3 players, USB drives, and cell phones). He holds 13 US patents for methods of building semiconductor devices.

Nearly 13 years later, Roger decided it was time to go back to school for his MBA degree. The semiconductor industry is volatile and has frequent lay-offs, so Roger wanted to gain more education to further his credentials and stability. He heard about WGU from his brother-in-law, who is a mentor and graduate of WGU. He found that the program was not only affordable, but that it also fit his schedule. Looking back on his MBA studies, Roger says, "I remember being about half-way through the MBA program and thought - 'What was I thinking?' It was during the spring when I wanted to be out mountain bike riding, but instead found myself studying. As I finished up my MBA, my wife said to me, 'You should get a PhD now.' I said, 'Are you Crazy?' At least for now that is my answer..." Roger completed his MBA in March 2009.

Now that Roger has graduated, is currently employed and financially stable, he plans on doing volunteer work to gain experience using his MBA. He shares with us the following insight. "Award winning speaker and writer Dr. Vincent Muli Wa Kituku often tells his audiences to 'be the CEO of all you do.' As graduates of WGU, we are doing that very thing in our lives - choosing our path of life and being responsible for our own progression."



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Graduate Spotlight: William Taylor

Canal Winchester, Ohio

William Taylor received his Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management from WGU in May 2009 and his MBA in June 2009. He is a 46-year-old father of ten and the founding CEO of several successful businesses such as Jericho Mortgage, Getmy.com and CD Rewards.com.

Twelve months ago, Bill found WGU and set a goal to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree in one year. By utilizing his current competencies and dedicating many hours of hard work, he was able to meet this goal. During his time as a student at WGU, Bill developed a love for the university which inspired him to originate the WGU "Accelerate Your Education" racing campaign. This effort promoted the university to others around the country through a race car emblazoned with the WGU logo. Materials and brochures are also distributed at the racing events.



Bill says, "Without the vision of WGU most of us would not be able to maintain our families and work life while accomplishing this goal. Now that we have finished, we should strive to continue our growth and to excel in all that we do. As a student, I had a personal realization - I didn't know what I didn't know. This has changed both my personal and business life. Now we must challenge ourselves to see WGU as our alma mater and help the university grow. WGU taught me that in order to achieve a goal you have to push yourself and allow others to help. Even in a self-paced environment, it is only with outside help from friends, family, mentors, and those that paved the way before us, that I was able to achieve my goals."



WGU student Jeremy Pope pictured here with WGU race car.

WGU Has Joined Twitter

Now you can keep up with what's happening at WGU by following us on Twitter. Watch for new degree programs, scholarship offerings, media coverage and more! It's free to join, so visit www.twitter.com/WGU to start reading our "tweets" and stay connected!





Graduate Spotlight: Nathan Creer

Farmington, Utah

Nathan Creer received his MBA in Healthcare Management in May 2009. He is a healthcare administrator for the Ogden Clinic, located in Ogden, Utah. Nate has worked in healthcare, rehabilitation services, and with children who have special needs since 1998. Nate is married and has a son. Both his wife and son are legally blind, so Nate uses his compassion and personal experience with blindness to help others. He volunteers as state treasurer for the Utah Parents of Blind Children and is an active member of the National Federation of the Blind.

Now that Nate has finished his MBA, he plans to continue working in healthcare administration and to continue using his compassion for the blind. He says, "I plan to work as a strong voice for quality healthcare, improved physician work-life balance, and for Braille literacy, and high expectations for all blind people."

Nate shares how he is a different person now that he has completed his WGU studies: "WGU has given me the confidence and ability to look at problems and situations in a different light. The experience has taught me something I already knew deep down - that I can do what I set my

mind to. A healthcare degree gives me the backing to pursue my goals of improving healthcare for patients."

One of Nate's favorite quotes is from Erik Weihenmayer, a blind rock climber, "People get trapped into thinking about just one way of doing things." Nate says, "WGU has proven that this does not have to be the case when it comes to education. I personally know now that I can move on, make a difference, and improve lives."





Graduate Spotlight: Elias Perez

Price, Utah

Elias Perez was born and raised in Puebla, Mexico. He attended Benemerito de los Americas, a private school in Mexico City, from sixth grade through college. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education in 1977. Eventually, he moved to Utah and attended the College of Eastern Utah and received an associate of science degree and an Associate of Applied Science and Machine Tool Technology Certification. He worked in the mining machining field for nine years.

Continuing his pursuit of education, Elias again returned to college and attended Utah State University and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education. Over the past 12 years, he has taught cabinet making and Spanish, as well as coached soccer, track and cross county at Carbon High School. In 2004, he started working full time at the College of Eastern Utah teaching draft and CAD classes, while also teaching machine tool technology and guitar making classes part time.

Elias is married and has two grown sons. In his spare time, he plays South American folkloric music and performs with the group 'Los Hermanos de los Andes,' a music group based in Utah County, Utah. He also builds guitars, flutes and other assorted string instruments. Elias earned his Master of Education in Learning and Technology degree in February 2009.

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<u>savings</u>



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for action, drama, suspense and savings!







Healthcare IT, EMR, and Informatics Careers Available Nationwide

Graduates with a degree in Informatics are in high demand as a result of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which appropriated \$19 billion to help hospitals implement EMRs. If you have a degree in Informatics or a related field, we have a career for you!

In business for over 30 years, Parker Healthcare IT is a premier recruiting and placement company, focusing on placing first class healthcare IT talent at top hospitals nationwide.

We concentrate on finding contractors and direct hire candidates for EMR implementations and CIS projects as well as IT/IS infrastructure positions for the most respected hospitals nationwide in positions such as:

- Build Analysts / Applications Coordinators
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Our top candidates are professionals with industry experience and a degree in Informatics, Healthcare Administration, HIM, Health Sciences, or other Computer Science/Information Systems field.

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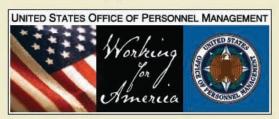
To get our help jump starting your healthcare IT career, email your resume to joei@parkerhealthcareit.com



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WGU Alumni Affairs offers:
Online Community
Alumni Mentoring
Education Placement Center
Resume Development

http://alumni.wgu.edu



WGU students and alumni have access to the NACElink Network's national job bank.

http://alumni.wgu.edu



CareerOneStop is a U.S. Department of Labor sponsored web site that offers career tools to job seekers.

www.careeronestop.org



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Western Governors University Nursing Education Programs Receive CCNE Accreditation

WGU's Competency-Based Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs Accredited Through 2014

Western Governors University's Nursing Education Programs have been accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

The initial accreditation, which has a five-year term, was awarded following a rigorous process that included a site visit as well as a review of WGU's nursing curriculum.

An autonomous arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, CCNE is the foremost accrediting body for nursing schools that offer baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Officially recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a national accreditation agency, it is the only accrediting body devoted exclusively to the evaluation of baccalaureate and graduate nursing degree programs. Accreditation is a nongovernmental peer review process that evaluates each program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes and assesses the performance of the program in achieving the mission and goals.

"Providing educational opportunities and degree programs to meet the needs of underserved populations and employers with critical workforce needs is part of WGU's mission, and earning CCNE accreditation allows us to address the growing shortage of nurses and nurse educators in the U.S," said WGU President Robert Mendenhall. "Accreditation demonstrates that our approach, which combines technology and competency-based learning with comprehensive clinical experience, will produce graduates who are well prepared to fulfill their roles in patient care, nurse education, and leadership."



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WGU Announces Scholarship for Aspiring School Principals

Up to \$2,000 Available for Students Enrolling in WGU's Master's in Educational Leadership Program

Western Governors University is helping to ease the financial burden for teachers who want to become principals with a new scholarship program.

The WGU Aspiring Principals Scholarship Program awards up to \$2,000 to selected students who enroll in the online university's NCATE-approved M.S. in Educational Leadership program.

WGU's M.S. in Educational Leadership prepares licensed



teachers for certification to become a principal, vice principal, or assistant principal. The course of study focuses on the principal as the school's instructional team leader, or chief learning officer. The program uses a case study format and includes a six-month practicum during which the student works closely with a school administrator at the practicum site. Like all WGU degrees, the M.S. in Educational Leadership program is competency-based, which means that students advance by demonstrating their competence through carefully designed assessments and completion of a capstone project.

WGU is planning to award 10 Aspiring Principals Scholarships. The program is competitive, and awards will be based on the candidate's academic record, readiness for online study at WGU, and current competency. To be eligible for this scholarship, applicants must possess a bachelor's degree and a valid teaching license. Scholarships will be awarded at the rate of \$500 per six-month term for up to four terms. For more information, go to www.wgu.edu/principal or call 1-866-225-5948 (866-CALL-WGU).

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WGU Nursing Education Receives \$500,000 Grant from the Texas Workforce Commission

Pilot Program for Nation's First Competency-Based B.S. in Nursing Leading to RN Licensure Set to Begin in Texas This Fall

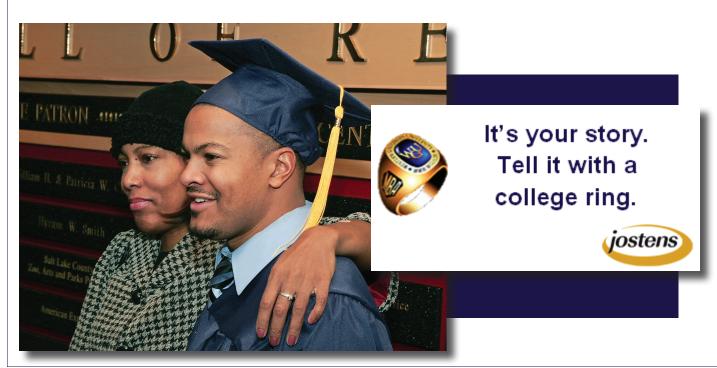
Western Governors University has received a \$500,000 grant from the Texas Workforce Commission for the development and launch of the first national, accredited online competency-based bachelor's degree program aimed at preparing students for initial licensure as registered nurses. The program, which is called the Multi-State Approach to the Preparation of Registered Nurses, or MAP-RN, is being developed by WGU in collaboration with state workforce agencies and health-care institutions. The Texas pilot program is slated to begin this fall.

Last year, more than 50,000 applicants to nursing schools were turned away, despite a nationwide shortage of registered nurses. This innovative new program is designed to help address this crisis in U.S. healthcare by making quality nursing education more accessible to working adults. The program combines WGU's online, competency-based academic approach with intensive clinical simulations and clinical practice at partner hospitals, supervised by onsite clinical coaches serving as WGU adjunct faculty. Texas is the second state to launch a pilot program for this degree program; the first pilot is set to begin in California in July.

In addition to the Texas Workforce Commission, WGU has partnered with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, U.S. Department of Labor, the California Workforce and Development Agency, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Catholic Healthcare West, Hospital Corporation of America, Kaiser Permanente, Tenet Healthcare, and Universal Health Services. For more information regarding this program, go to www.wgu.edu/TexasRN.



"Prospective nurses will now have access to a high quality degree program that will enable them to earn a B.S. and prepare for their RN license flexibly and affordably," said WGU President Robert Mendenhall. "The B.S. in Nursing leading to initial licensure program complements WGU's other CCNE-accredited bachelor's and master's degree nursing programs for already-licensed RNs and supports our mission to provide educational opportunities and degree programs to meet the needs of underserved populations and employers with critical workforce needs."



The Origins of Academic Regalia

Academic Robes and Regalia

The Origins of Academic Dress

The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries with the garb of the medieval scholar. The ordinary dress of the scholar—whether student or teacher—was the dress of a cleric. Long gowns were worn, perhaps being necessary for warmth in unheated buildings. Typically, medieval scholars took at least minor oaths, made certain vows, and often were tonsured (shaved hair on the crown of the head as part of a ritual). Hoods served to cover the tonsured head, and were reserved for teachers who, at that time, held the equivalent of master's or doctoral degrees.

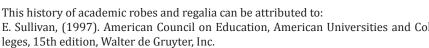
The assignment of colors to signify certain faculties was a much later development, having only been standardized in the United States in the late 19th century. White, taken from the white fur trimming of the Oxford and Cambridge Bachelor of Arts hoods, was assigned to Arts and Letters. Red, one of the traditional colors of the church, went to theology. Green, the color of medieval herbs, was adopted for medicine, and olivebecause it was so close to green—was given to pharmacy. Golden yellow, standing for the wealth which scientific research has produced, was assigned to the sciences.

While European institutions have great diversity in their academic regalia, American colleges and universities settled on a definitive system for all to follow. A commission made up of representatives from leading institutions met at Columbia University in 1895 to adopt a code of academic dress that regulated the cut, style, and materials of academic gowns, as well as prescribed the colors which were to represent the various fields of learning.

In 1932, the American Council of Education authorized a committee to approve a code for academic regalia that has been in effect since that time. As a result, following are the categories of the degrees awarded by Western Governors University, with their associated hood colors for master's degrees:

> Drab (Beige) Commerce, Accountancy, Business Light Blue Education Apricot Nursing Public Health Salmon Pink Science and Information Technology Golden Yellow

This history of academic robes and regalia can be attributed to: E. Sullivan, (1997). American Council on Education, American Universities and Col-



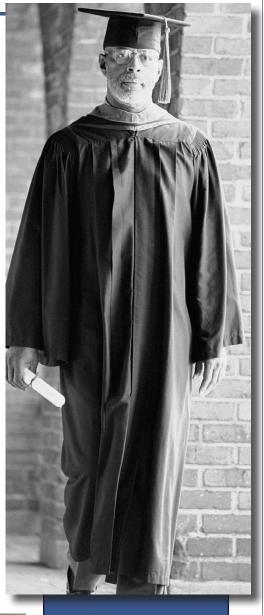
COMING SOON!

WGU will be launching a new online alumni community for graduates and students.

New features include:

Volunteer Mentoring **Facebook Integration** Class Notes **Custom Profiles**





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