



UAF graduate Olaide Adepoju-Wolfe is ready to celebrate!  
UAF photo by Brenda Gibson

# STANDARD NINE

Institutional Integrity



## 9. Institutional Integrity

The University of Alaska Fairbanks has long expressed a commitment to institutional integrity. Its Mission Statement operative during the 1990s declared that UAF sought to provide “a free and open forum where ideas and issues may be professionally pursued and frankly debated in an environment of mutual respect and intellectual integrity.” Furthermore, according to the same statement, UAF has long worked “to provide an intellectually stimulating learning process which is culturally sensitive and empowering to its students.” Consistent with that commitment, UAF “seeks a culturally diverse environment that values and promotes equal treatment of sexes, races, cultural and ethnic groups throughout its academic programs, student body, faculty, and staff.” This commitment, although not mentioned explicitly in the UAF Mission Statement adopted in 2000, continues in policies and regulations, and it was manifest in 1993 with the development of the position of assistant to the chancellor for equal opportunity. These features of the UAF mission are elaborated and implemented by Board of Regents Policies and University Regulations governing academic freedom, conflict of interest, fair treatment of faculty, administration, staff, and students, and in codes of conduct applicable to faculty and students.

### Evidence-Based Description

#### **Personnel**

The UAF community of administrators, faculty, and staff subscribes to, seeks to exemplify, and advocates high ethical standards in the management and operations of the university and in its engagement of students, the public at large, organizations, and external agencies (9.A.1). It does so first and foremost in the formulation of the requisite policies and regulations governing ethics and conduct for administrators, faculty, and staff. Accordingly, the Board of Regents has promulgated policies governing nondiscrimination [G2 P04.01.020], equal employment opportunity/affirmative action [G2 P04.02.010], discrimination and sexual harassment [G2 P04.02.020], reasonable accommodations – Americans with disabilities [G2 P04.02.030], public safety [G2 P02.09.000], and standards for user conduct as concerns information resources [G2 P02.07.050]. Furthermore, university policies and regulations provide standards governing conflicts of interest generally [G2 P04.10.000] (9.A.4). These standards govern outside activities [G2 P04.10.010], abuse of office for political purposes [G2 P04.10.020], conflicts of interest [G2 P04.10.030], and nepotism [G2 P04.10.040].

Established grievance policies for faculty and staff are evidence of the university’s concern for the ethical treatment of its employees (9.A.1). The grievance resolution process has been revised three times in the period documented. For staff members covered by a bargaining unit, that process is outlined by contract; for all other staff, the process is covered by university policy. Some of the issues that have proceeded through various steps of review and resolution and/or dismissal during the past ten years include underpayment for course instruction, wrongful termination, violation of respectful workplace, disability, age, and race discrimination, unwarranted reduction in hours, unfair letter of reprimand, non-retention, sexual harassment, retaliation, suspension, terms and conditions of contract, expense reimbursement, overtime compensation, denial of merit pay, unfair evaluation, violation of internal recruitment mandate, violation of hiring process, program assessment, denial of tenure and promotion, professional

misconduct, reduction in contract, handicap inaccessibility, fiscal and program mismanagement, and nepotism. Of 144 cases concerning one or another of the issues addressed during the period under review, two are pending resolution and the remainder are more or less evenly distributed between grievances remedied and grievances dismissed or denied.

Since the organization of tripartite faculty into a collective bargaining unit (United Academics-AAUP/AFT) in 1997 [G14], grievances related to extant collective bargaining agreements proceed along a negotiated process of grievance resolution. In a report to the Board of Regents in October 2000, the director of the Statewide Office of Labor Relations noted grievances from UAF faculty in both the United Academics and the Alaska Community Colleges' Federation of Teachers (ACCFT) units [G15]. ACCFT has recently grieved discrimination "against ACCFT-represented faculty on the basis of union membership" ("failing to include any bargaining unit members in a 1996 equity distribution for non-represented faculty"). ACCFT has also "grieved the movement of non-represented employees to the UA 2000 health plan." United Academics grievances have included the issue of reassignment and change in workload of a UAF faculty member and a discipline/finding of sexual harassment, which the union decided not to pursue to arbitration.

UAF maintains a strong commitment to academic freedom [A9.2; G2 P04.04.010] (9.A.5). The Board of Regents has stated that nothing in its own policy or in university regulations "will be construed to limit or abridge any person's right to free speech or to infringe the academic freedom of any member of the university community." More recently, President Hamilton issued a strong statement supporting academic freedom and free speech [A9.3]. This was reiterated in a memo from Chancellor Lind [A9.4]. For the period under review, no UAF academic college, school, institute, or campuses other than the School of Education identified institutional integrity concerns in its unit self-study report. Areas of concern for some School of Education faculty include faculty participation in governance of the school, fair treatment of faculty and staff by administrators, and discrimination that has in some cases led to resignations and/or reassignments of faculty. It is unclear from faculty comments what complaints remain at the level of allegation and which have been substantiated through an informal or formal fact-finding process. While some complaints have been forwarded to the appropriate administrators and/or university officers, some faculty note that complaints have not been addressed in a way consistent with extant complaint and grievance resolution processes. The recent appointment of a new dean of the school is expected to contribute to program stability and closure to complaints and grievances in a way consistent with university procedure.

## **Research**

UAF is committed to a research ethic with policy and regulations governing "conduct in research, scholarship, and creative activity" [G2 P10.07.06-07]. This ethic includes compliance with federal statutes (e.g., Animal Welfare Act) and professional standards governing humane use of animals in life sciences research and the use of human subjects. The university is informed of current developments on research integrity such as the final draft of the U.S. Public Health Service Policy on Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (December 2000) [E9.1] and is in the process of developing appropriate institutional procedures coordinated by the Office of Sponsored Programs. Rigorous project review is conducted regularly by the UAF Institutional Animal Care Committee and the Institutional Review Board (Human Subjects Committee).

Moreover, the UAF research community is well aware of the uniqueness of research in the Circumpolar North. Accordingly, research is guided by protocol “Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic,” as prepared by the Social Science Task Force of the U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee and as adopted by the Arctic Social Sciences Division of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation [E9.2]. Research in the Arctic entails engagement of the Alaska Native community. Accordingly, UAF researchers are expected to be aware of and responsible for compliance with Policy Guidelines for Research prepared in 1993 by the Alaska Federation of Natives [E9.3].

UAF’s unique research resources include the Arctic Region Supercomputing Center. Consistent with its association with the U.S. Department of Defense, the center has special security procedures in place concerning research integrity and participation in the Defense Research and Engineering Network and the DOD High Performance Computing Modernization Program. In addition, Board of Regents Policy [G2 P02.07.01] provides a framework for access to and responsible use of university information resources.

The University Museum operates with both a research and a community service function, given its attention to Arctic anthropological and archaeological investigations and collection of artifacts. It contributes to institutional integrity through its operations subject to the 1995 Institutional Code of Ethics [E9.4], which is based on the Code of Ethics for Museums of the American Association of Museums [E9.5]. Given that its collection involves Native Alaskan cultural artifacts, the museum also operates under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [E9.6].

## Students

In the late 1990s, UAF students, through the UA Coalition of Student Leaders, and faculty, through the Faculty Alliance, worked with the Board of Regents to revise policy and regulations regarding the reciprocal expectations of UAF and its students [G2 P09.01.00]. Student rights and responsibilities are clarified in university policies and regulations, which include a “Student Code of Conduct,” an equitable student judicial process, and the range of disciplinary sanctions and conditions of reinstatement of university benefits [G2 P09.02.00, P09.02.02; G3 R09.02.05]. Policies and regulations cover academic dishonesty; forgery, falsification, alteration, or misuse of documents, funds, or property; damage or destruction of property; theft of property or services; harassment; endangerment, assault, or infliction of physical harm; disruptive or obstructive actions; misuse of firearms, explosives, weapons, dangerous devices, or dangerous chemicals; and misuse of alcohol or other intoxicants or drugs. Student dispute resolution procedures regarding employment, academics, judicial actions, and administrative decisions are described in policy and regulations [G2 P09.03.00; G3 R09.03.00]. These system-wide policies, regulations, procedures, and rules establish high ethical standards for UAF in its relationship with students (9.A.1, 9.A.2).

As a result of implementing computer software in 1999, the UAF Office of Judicial Services is now able to compile judicial statistics for each academic year and to evaluate changes over time periods. These statistics are reported in accordance with federal requirements. In academic year 1999-2000 the Office of Residence Life and/or the Office of Judicial Services encountered a variety of incidents of student misconduct that are also criminal infractions (reported to local law

enforcement authorities). These include alcohol abuse (174 cases), harassment (26 cases), use of controlled substances (20 cases), vandalism (12 cases), and assault or domestic violence (37 cases). Given that alcohol abuse contributes to more than 95 percent of recorded incidents of violence on campus, UAF adopted in 1999 “a much more intrusive, assessment model of treatment” rather than depending merely on general education efforts. The director of the Office of Judicial Services reports that the university has a contractual agreement with Family Recovery Center to provide assessment and treatment to referred students. During fall semester 2000 UAF referred twenty-eight students, and the director judges the results to be “promising,” with the number of repeat incidents of alcohol abuse “greatly reduced.”

According to the Office of Judicial Services, reported incidents of student academic dishonesty during the period 1993-2000 were in the incidental range (one to five cases annually). Most cases were resolved by the individual faculty member, department chair, or unit dean.

Student conduct in athletics at UAF is governed by National Collegiate Athletic Association bylaws. The UAF Department of Athletics has an officer responsible for NCAA compliance. According to this officer, thirteen violations were reported in the last three years, each categorized as a “secondary” infraction (“one that provides only a limited recruiting or competitive advantage and that is isolated or inadvertent in nature”). NCAA oversight review of reported secondary infractions has not resulted in the imposition of penalties beyond those locally administered by department administrators. One major violation reported in 1992 resulted in forfeiture of all games in which an ineligible player participated.

## **Public Relations**

UAF publications are carefully developed and revised regularly to reflect the university mission and goals, and they adhere to a high standard in accurately and consistently reflecting the university through text, photos, and graphics (9.A.3). Adherence to standards is achieved through the coordinated effort of the UAF Office of University Relations, the Office of Admissions, the Office of the Registrar, the Development Office, and the Affirmative Action Office. Publication proofs are rigorously reviewed to ensure accuracy and uniformity. All major UAF media releases are reviewed prior to publication by the director of the Office of University Relations. Policy announcements are not released without the chancellor’s approval. (See also Standard 3.D.)

UAF strives to assure accurate representation of academic programs and course offerings in its catalog. Each year several courses are deleted via the procedures set in place by the Faculty Senate curricular review process. In 1996, by the provost’s directive, 489 courses that had not been offered in several years were deleted from the 1995-1996 catalog. While affirming the right of academic departments to delete courses, the Faculty Senate in February 1997 amended the policy on approval of academic changes by providing a spring cycle of review [G11 Minutes]. In April 1997 the Faculty Senate approved a motion requiring academic departments annually to review courses not offered in the previous five years [G11 Minutes]. The issue of catalog integrity was raised again in the 1999-2000 academic year. A review undertaken in early 2000 by the Office of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research revealed that the catalog still contained 166 courses that were not being offered. On agreement between the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate, deans and directors of colleges and schools were provided a list of courses that had not been offered since 1997 with the request that departments take action to

delete courses. Following an expedited Faculty Senate procedure, approximately 120 courses were deleted from the 2001-2002 catalog.

In response to concerns raised about the UAF web site—including issues of accuracy, quality, and uniformity—a UAF Web Team was formed in 1999. The team has oversight responsibility for a redesign of the centrally maintained pages of the university web site. This site went live on November 1, 2000. Guidelines for official UAF web pages are available online [W9.1]. These guidelines assist departments in conforming to the design of the web site and ensure accessibility to information as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Office of University Relations abides by the Alaska Public Records Act, with supplemental policy and procedures in place for handling confidential material and database files. The office also has a Policies and Procedures Manual governing communication standards [E9.7].

The recently established Polar Express Office, which issues identification cards to the university community, adheres to federal laws and regulations such as the Federal Trade Commission's Fair Information Practices in the Electronic Marketplace and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act.

## Governance

UAF regularly enlists the joint participation of administrators, faculty, staff, and students in governance, particularly concerning the evaluation and revision of policies, procedures, and publications that bear upon the continuing integrity of the university (9.A.2). The effective and efficient operation of the university is predicated on this principle of shared governance [G2 P03.01.01]. Participation occurs through coordinated operations of the UAF Faculty Senate, the UAF Staff Council, the Associated Students of UAF, the Graduate Student Organization, and the UAF Governance Coordinating Committee [W9.2].

## Faculty

The UAF Faculty Senate has over the last ten-year period continued to demonstrate its commitment to institutional integrity. In accordance with its prerogative to recommend on institutional policy and regulations, the senate has contributed to the evaluation and revision of policies, procedures, and publications to ensure continuing integrity throughout the university. This commitment is demonstrated in the following sample of Faculty Senate actions over the past decade [G11 Minutes]:

- **November 1991.** The senate addressed the issue of educational equity, expressing its commitment to “equal access” regardless of gender in accordance with Alaska law and Board of Regents policy. It also encouraged the integration of scholarship on women in the curriculum “in order to present students the opportunity to understand women’s and men’s perspectives within a culturally diverse society.”
- **December 1991.** The senate reaffirmed “the unequivocal commitment of the faculty to equal opportunity and assessment for all students, regardless of race, gender, and cultural or linguistic background.”
- **December 1991.** The senate reaffirmed Board of Regents policy on academic freedom with commitment to an environment of free and honest inquiry and the right of individuals to free speech. Specifically, it addressed faculty members’ freedom from

institutional censorship or discipline, balanced by a responsibility to differentiate extramural utterances from official representation of the university. (See Standard 4.A.)

- **February 1993.** The senate reaffirmed UAF policy on nondiscrimination, resolving that “no discrimination against or harassment of individuals will be condoned on any of the campuses or in the programs or activities of the university.”
- **December 1995.** The senate took up the morally probative issue of consensual sexual relations between faculty and students. The Faculty Affairs Committee of the senate advanced the concept of the university as a moral community “in which community faculty are governed in conduct by a professional ethic, notwithstanding any abiding personal ethic.” This professional ethic “includes a comportment of respect for students, which comportment eschews any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.” The motion was moved forward and incorporated into Board of Regents Policy [G2 P04.020.020.C] and university regulation [G3 R04.020.020.C].
- **December 1995.** The senate faced one of its most difficult moments as it disagreed with the chancellor in action taken in the search for dean of the College of Rural Alaska. It was the position of the senate and the CRA Faculty Council that the chancellor had inappropriately set aside university policy on search committees for deans and directors. The senate president communicated the senate’s position to the university president, and the senate subsequently voted a resolution of censure of the chancellor. The chancellor nonetheless followed through with the appointment of the executive dean of CRA.
- **April 1997.** The senate addressed issues of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. Of concern were the effects on rights to free association, the need to avoid character assassination, the importance of safeguarding faculty members’ academic freedom in the use of course materials, and the need to distinguish violations of policy that follow from ignorance as opposed to deliberate intent.
- **May 1997.** The senate established a Statement of Professional Ethics [A9.5], thereby committing the faculty “severally and jointly as academic citizens to abide by and to enforce this standard of conduct.” The statement addresses scholarly competence, critical self-discipline, honest academic conduct and thus the protection of the academic freedom of students, the avoidance of discrimination or harassment of faculty colleagues, the acknowledgement of academic debt, objectivity in the professional judgment of colleagues, and public understanding in extramural utterances while distinguishing such utterances from the official position of the university.
- **March 1999.** The senate found itself once again in disagreement with a senior administrator when it took issue with UA President Mark Hamilton over his decision to appoint the UAF chancellor directly rather than through a national search process. The senate president expressed the surprise with which senate leaders and members greeted the appointment, saying that President Hamilton “did not inform the UAF senate leadership of his decision to appoint UAS Chancellor Marshall Lind to the position of UAF chancellor until just prior to making the public announcement.” President Hamilton, who had been appointed by the Board of Regents in August 1998 and had limited experience in academic administration, explained his action as being “for the best interest of the institution,” acting quickly in response to “the entire atmosphere of budget related issues that [had] piled up over a decade.” He admitted, however, that although Board of Regents Policy accords him the right to appoint the chancellor [G2 P02.02.06], the formality of consulting the faculty “was something he stampeded” and “would have

changed were such a thing to come up again” [G11 Minutes]. Senators voiced their objection to direct appointments, citing the need for UAF to be exemplary in due process. Equally important was the claim by the former chair of the senate Faculty Affairs Committee that the president’s action ignored principles not only of due process, but also of shared governance, equal opportunity in hiring, and affirmative action. Another senator expressed concern that the president’s action would set an unacceptable precedent such that other administrators would likewise make unilateral decisions. The senate passed a resolution “strongly condemning” the president’s unilateral action, but even so the president was not prepared to rescind his appointment and conduct a national search for a UAF chancellor [E9.8].

- **November 2000.** The senate passed a motion to establish a university policy on a student appeal process for academic decisions other than grade appeals. This was in response to concerns for equitable treatment of students in decisions such as denial of admission to programs of study. The chancellor approved the motion and it is now university policy.

### **Staff**

UAF complies with standards of institutional integrity and fair treatment through its continued response to staff concerns about working conditions. Institutional integrity is to some degree manifest in the morale of members of the university community. (See Standard 6.F for a full description of staff roles and governance.)

Consistent with its commitment to nondiscrimination, the University of Alaska instituted a domestic partnership benefits program in September 1995. UAF Staff Council addressed this item of university policy by passing a resolution [W6.3 Minutes June, 1996] requesting that the Board of Regents maintain the existing domestic partnership benefits program. The resolution noted that “the current and continuing advantages of the domestic partnership benefits program are the creation of a more fair and non-discriminatory workplace environment, and improved morale among faculty and staff who feel more fairly treated and valued.”

Surveys of UAF staff conducted in 1998 and 1999 (see Standard 6.F) provide evidence that the majority of employees are satisfied with grievance policy and are confident that the administration values the role of staff in the success of the university.

### **Appraisal**

The foregoing description demonstrates UAF’s commitment to institutional integrity notwithstanding problems identified. The university community of administrators, faculty, and staff works to establish, sustain, and enhance this commitment through continuous review and revision of policies and regulations. There are clearly adequate avenues for participation at all levels, with the traditional governance bodies contributing reasonably to policy formation in a way consistent with their constitutional responsibilities. The unionized faculty and the process of collective bargaining have contributed to increased dialogue between the administration and faculty in particular. The negotiation of working conditions has contributed to increased performance accountability of administration and faculty. This is evident from annual review of faculty according to the assigned annual faculty workload in teaching, research, and service, from comprehensive post-tenure review of faculty, from outcomes assessment plans of degree

programs and reporting made available through the Office of the Provost, and from outcomes assessment results of the UAF Core Curriculum as reported by the UAF Faculty Senate Core Review Committee. There is requisite attention to both faculty and administrator performance review, consistent with university policy and regulations as well as extant collective bargaining agreements.

The Faculty Senate Faculty Development Committee, together with the provost's associate for faculty development, is composing a Faculty Handbook, initially to be made available on the World Wide Web. This information resource for faculty should contribute to more effective communication of changes to policy and regulations that govern faculty conduct. It is particularly important that new faculty as well as continuing faculty be aware of their responsibilities under the Faculty Ethics Statement passed by the UAF Faculty Senate. It is essential that such information be included in new faculty orientations. The same importance should be accorded the Staff Supervisory Training Series as an avenue for staff awareness of university policy and regulation. The issue of communication of changes to university policy and regulation is particularly important from the perspective of the UAF Office of the Registrar, which is sometimes misperceived by faculty as the source of changes that in fact follow from faculty governance action. Faculty need to be more cognizant of their responsibility in following approved regulations governing changes of grades, grade definitions, final exam requirements, course drop and withdrawal process, and contact hour requirements. Most faculty are not aware of the Statement of Professional Ethics established by the Faculty Senate in 1997 [E9.8], and so there is a need for better communication of this code, especially at new faculty orientation.

Despite differences that arose between the university president and the Faculty Senate on the issue of appointment of the UAF chancellor, there is widespread acknowledgment that both President Hamilton and Chancellor Lind continue to demonstrate effective leadership and commitment to the mission of UAF and the university system. This positive consequence, however, does not diminish the validity of the senate's continuing resolve to assure compliance with principles of shared governance, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and due process in the hiring of officers and senior administrators. There is reasonable justification for sustained vigilance as the role of affirmative action in higher education policy continues to be debated nationally. The process for appointment of the dean of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) provides a recent case in point, as does the imminent search for dean of the College of Rural Alaska. Some faculty in the College of Liberal Arts expressed concern about inadequate attention to equal opportunity and affirmative action guidelines in the search process approved in 2000 for the position of CLA dean. The UAF Office of Equal Opportunity received a written complaint about the process. The position was filled through an internal system-wide search rather than a national search. With the resignation of the dean of the College of Rural Alaska effective July 2001, there is again a question of whether the search process will be responsive to the faculty governance position articulated in the debate that led to censure of the chancellor in 1995.

## **Projections**

Institutional integrity is inherent in the UAF Mission Statement [A1.1], of corollary vision statements, and of the president's commitment to program planning and budgeting. In addition,

“Strategic Plan: UAF 2005” [A1.4] articulates a commitment to institutional integrity in academic planning and program implementation. The provost has set in place a formal process that integrates academic planning with fiscal year budgeting. Goals and objectives provide benchmarks for evaluation consistent with a set timeline.

Continuing and renewed emphasis on faculty development projects, staff supervisory training, program outcomes-based assessment, research integrity, and instruction in research ethics in the natural and social sciences will contribute measurably to the integrity of the university community.

The Office of the Dean of Students and student governance groups such as the Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Graduate Student Organization can be expected to take proactive measures to assure student awareness of their responsibilities. This will enhance active attention to the Student Code of Conduct and other relevant policies associated with institutional integrity.

With the reorganization of some colleges and schools and the appointment of permanent rather than interim deans and directors, administrative leadership in the colleges and schools will assure definitive attention to principles and practices that bear upon institutional integrity.

In sum, UAF stands committed to sustained institutional integrity as an essential determinant of its mission, vision statements, and strategies.

## Standard 9 Documents List

### Appendices

- A1.1 UA and UAF Mission Statements (extracts from UA Regents Policies)
- A1.4 UAF Strategic Plan 2005
- A9.1 UAF Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy
- A9.2 Academic Freedom, Regents' Policy P04.04.010
- A9.3 President Mark Hamilton Memo on Freedom of Speech
- A9.4 Chancellor Lind Memo on Freedom of Speech
- A9.5 Faculty Senate Statement on Ethics

### Exhibits

- G2 Regents' Policy (<http://www.alaska.edu/bor/>)
- G3 University Regulation (<http://www.alaska.edu/bor/>)
- G4 Board of Regents' Home Page (<http://www.alaska.edu/bor/>)
- G11 Faculty Senate Home Page (<http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty/index.html>)
- G14 Collective Bargaining Agreement: United Academics – AAUP/AFT (UNAC) (<http://www.alaska.edu/labor/current/united/table2001.html>)
- G15 Collective Bargaining Agreement: Alaska Community Colleges' Federation of Teachers (ACCFT) (<http://www.alaska.edu/labor/current/accft/Contract/table.html>)
  
- E9.1 U.S. Public Health Service Policy on Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research
- E9.2 Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic
- E9.3 Policy and Guidelines for Research: Alaska Federation of Natives, 1993
- E9.4 1995 Institutional Code of Ethics
- E9.5 Code of Ethics for Museums of the American Association of Museums
- E9.6 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- E9.7 University Relations Policies and Procedures Manual
- E9.8 President Hamilton's Memo: Institutional Integrity and the Appointment of the UAF Chancellor
- E9.9 Copies of print and electronic promotional materials (collection)

### Additional Web Sites

- W6.2 UA System Governance <http://sygov.swadm.alaska.edu>
- W6.3 UAF Staff Council <http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/staff/index.html>
- W9.1 UAF Web Page Guidelines <http://www.uaf.edu/univrel/guide/>
- W9.2 UAF Governance <http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/>



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