Re-Conceptualizing Service as a Critical and Integral Role for Faculty in Recreation and Leisure Studies

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Abstract

Recreation and leisure studies faculty need to engage in more strategically chosen service activities at university, national and community levels. In order for this advice to make sense given the demands of tenure, it is necessary to re-conceptualize at least a portion of one's service activity as outreach so that it becomes integral to the university's reward structure. Outreach involves serious and demanding work, which rigorously follows the guidelines of good scholarship. Faculty also need to re-define their approach to other forms of service, including: institutional citizenship, disciplinary citizenship and civic contributions. Faculty can strategically manage their service activities to maximize benefits to all constituents. For outreach to become a an accepted part of faculty reward systems, the profession must first describe its own outreach standards, and departments will need to identify how these standards apply to their local situations.

Keywords: scholarship, service, engagement, tenure, promotion

Introduction

Faculty typically get one or both versions of advice that was offered to one new assistant professor: (a) "If untenured, do as little service as possible because it will take time away from research," or (b) "If untenured, do a good deal of service, beginning with the department and moving into the university with a dose of national professional service, because it will make you known" (Chenery, 1990). This author argues for a third position: faculty in recreation and leisure studies programs need to engage in *strategically* chosen service activities at community, university, and national levels. A variety of carefully chosen and planned service activities are increasingly necessary for the health of one's career, department, university, profession and community. In order for this advice to make sense given the demands of tenure, it is necessary to re-conceptualize at least a portion of one's service activities so that these efforts become integral to the present university reward structure, which requires scholarly outcomes. This change will require conscious effort on the part of professional leadership (such as SPRE), universities, departments and individual faculty as

the profession of recreation and leisure studies joins current national efforts to make a case for professional service and make outreach visible (see Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Lynton, 1995).

Professors' jobs have increasingly emphasized scholarly efforts during the past 40 years, and re-conceptualizing service as outreach is a timely change that meets the combined needs for faculties' professional advancement as well as enhancing the health of the various constituents they serve. Outreach has the potential to revitalize the diminished connection between town and gown so that universities are not seen as out of touch and out of date but rather as "sympathetically and productively involved with their communities" ("Kellogg Commission," 1999, p. 9) . Further, lessons learned from the elimination and downsizing of recreation departments nationwide demand that faculty conceptualize their roles so that teaching, scholarship and service are seen as more of an integrated whole rather than three separate parts. While it is widely acknowledged that faculty engaged in current research can enhance their teaching with up to date materials and applications, it is less recognized that outreach can enhance the quality of teaching in similar, if not more effective, ways. This is especially true in professional studies (e.g. recreation and leisure services), where applied work is the essence of what professionals do (Lynton, 1995). Therefore, service, in all its forms, which has frequently been de-emphasized during a faculty's preparation for tenure, is more crucial now than ever.

As such, faculty mentors need to re-visit the advice new faculty are given to allocate service to a peripheral role during their quest for tenure and promotion. Rather, mentors need to educate new faculty about better strategies for engaging in outreach activities so these activities produce desired outcomes and do not become unproductive burdens on an untenured faculty's time (Sandmann, Foster-Fishmann, Lloyd, Rauhe & Rosen, 2000). Senior faculty need to serve as mentors and role models for junior faculty by engaging in effective citizenship. This involvement will serve to strengthen their department's role and centrality to the university's mission.

Supporting arguments for re-conceptualizing service follows in three sections. First, the foundation is set via definitions related to service and background on the role of service in American universities. Second, the relevance of four types of service to recreation and leisure studies faculty are discussed. Third, suggestions are made for how recreation faculty can formalize outreach within the discipline in order to integrate outreach into existing university reward structures.

Supporting Concepts

For the past 15 years there much significant debate has transpired about the role of service in universities. Arguments have been made that institutions must organize to better serve both local and national needs, in more coherent and effective ways, by transforming their thinking about service "so that engagement becomes a priority on

every campus, and a central part of institutional mission" ("Kellogg Commission," 1999, p. 13).

Four Types of Service

Addressing how service can be re-conceptualized requires agreement on definitions. Although views of what constitutes good teaching and research are more clearly understood, the concept of service is vague, excessively inclusive, and has different meanings for different individuals, institutions, and disciplinary cultures (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999). There is growing consensus throughout higher education that professional service can be defined as "work based on the faculty member's professional expertise that contributes to the mission of the institution" (Elman & Smock, as cited in Lynton, 1995). Lynton provides the 1993 policy statement from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as one good example, which further clarifies what constitutes professional service activities: "(a) They contribute to the public welfare or the common good, (b) They call upon faculty members' academic and/or professional expertise, [and] (c) They directly address or respond to real-world problems, issues, interests or concerns" (p. 17). Professional service takes many forms including, but not limited to: "technology transfer, technical assistance, policy analysis, program evaluation, organizational development, community development, program development, professional development, expert testimony, [and] public information" (Lynton, p. 17).

One key to illuminating present debate about faculty service roles within a university is understanding that all faculty service involvement has value, but not all service is considered a scholarly pursuit. Service that qualifies as outreach (i.e. meets criteria similar to more traditional scholarship), must be clearly distinguished from other types of faculty service. Lynton (1995) provides definitions that clarify what the four types of faculty service activities entail:

> *Institutional citizenship* is committee work, student advising, and other forms of participation in the institutional operation;
>
> *Disciplinary citizenship* is contributions to the operation of a disciplinary or professional association;
>
> *Civic contributions* are serving in public offices, jury duty, or voluntarism with religious, philanthropic, and other nonprofit organizations (adapted from Lynton); and
>
> *Outreach* (as defined in a Michigan State University report) is "a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions" (Michigan State University report, as cited in Lynton, p. 19).

Understanding outreach

The concept of outreach has been adapted over time from what was first proposed in Boyer's (1990) progressive publication, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate,* where he argued for a broader understanding of scholarship that renewed American education's traditional view of scholarship by introducing the paradigms of scholarship of discovery, integration, application and teaching. According to Boyer, service is often seen as meritorious department or civic functions, but to be considered scholarship, "... service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity" (as cited in Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997. p. 12). In later publications, Boyer spoke not of scholarship of application but rather, *scholarship of engagement* "by which he meant those activities within any of the four scholarships that connect the academic with people and places outside of disciplinary camps and which ultimately direct the work of the academy 'toward larger, more humane ends'" (as cited in Huber, 1999, p. 3).

Boyer identified one reason service has received less attention by faculty, especially when it comes to roles and rewards: activities that count as "professional and/or public service may be identified, ... but aside from the general expectation of 'high quality' in such work" there has been little guidance as to what quality might mean (as cited in Glassick et al., 1997, p. 22). While accepted practice has been to develop context-specific definitions of outreach within each particular institution and discipline (Diamond, 1994), even the best definitions leave grey areas of uncertainty (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999). Fortunately for the recreation and leisure studies profession, which has yet to create its own discipline-specific description of outreach, a number examples from other disciplines have already been published ("Association of College," 1998; Diamond & Adam, 1995; Diamond & Adam, 2000; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Lynton, 1995).

While more specifics for developing criteria for quality outreach in recreation and leisure studies will be described in the last section of this paper, two points need to be made here. First, outreach most often refers to service activities outside the university, and with few exceptions, internal service activities are considered citizenship rather than outreach (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999). Second, for outreach to be considered scholarship it must meet a purposefully staged sequence of activities, each of which embodies familiar aspects, that are used to evaluate *all* types of scholarship: (a) clear goals, (b) adequate preparation, (c) appropriate methods, (d) significant results, (e) effective presentation and sharing of results, and (f) reflective critique (Glassick et al., 1997; Huber, 1999; Lynton, 1995).

The Past, Present and Future of Service in American Universities

Historically, there has been a strong connection between service and university missions. According to Boyer, the traditional mission of the university was teaching.

The mission of teaching was joined by one of service as land grant institutions were established post-civil war. While the work of investigation (i.e. research) emerged in the late 1800s from European traditions, science was not an established mission of universities until after World War II. Today, faculty at most academic institutions seek status and mobility through research and its related products of grants and peer reviewed publications (as cited in Glassick et. al., 1997).

However, times are changing. The Kellogg Commission (1999) made a strong case that the work of universities today is quickly becoming irrelevant as specialized disciplines increasingly fail to respond to real-world problems. The Commission proposed that by becoming "engaged institutions," universities can "redesign their teaching, research, extension and service functions" (p. 9) to become even more involved with their communities.

While most universities continue to promote service as part of their primary mission statements, many have yet to incorporate outreach into the formal faculty reward system. The author's home institution serves as an example. East Carolina University (ECU), historically a teacher-training college, has an explicit mission of *servire,* which is Latin meaning *to serve*. The mission goes on to state, "With a mission of teaching, research, and service, East Carolina University is a dynamic institution connecting people and ideas, finding solutions to problems, and seeking the challenges of the future" (www.ecu.edu). Therefore, ECU's mission is about applying its research to real-world problems—what the Kellogg Commission describes as "the engaged institution." However, ECU has yet to engage in the debate and documentation that will be necessary to incorporate outreach into the university's faculty reward system.

To the extent applied community research is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities, it can and should be considered outreach (Glassick, et al., 1997). Recreation and leisure studies is, at is heart, a service profession, and as such recreation faculty can provide leadership to home institutions who have not yet established outreach as part of the faculty reward system. By doing so, more recreation faculty will be rewarded by opportunities to jointly fulfill their obligations to be good citizens as well as good scholars. To the extent outreach is recognized within faculty reward systems, time spent on outreach will further one's efforts towards tenure and promotion. One's job as a new faculty member should not be just about research and teaching, putting off service involvement until after tenure. Faculty can excel by re-conceptualizing their approach to service and treating research, teaching and service as an integrated whole. The keys to effectiveness in service are knowledge, planning and strategic implementation. The next section discusses possible faculty roles and the potential of the four types of service in recreation and leisure studies departments.

The Potential of Service

Recreation and leisure faculty typically provide service at some point in their careers in each of the four areas defined. First, they serve at home in their departments, units, and universities in the form of *institutional citizenship*. Second, they are involved in *disciplinary citizenship* by providing leadership in professional associations and completing tasks to further to goals of these associations. Third, they provide *civic contributions* in their communities by taking leadership roles in various philanthropic or other non-profit organizations. Fourth, when recreation faculty apply their expertise to community issues through carefully planned academically relevant work, and creatively contribute to the public good in a way that furthers campus missions and meets community needs, they participate in *outreach*.

Institutional Citizenship

Institutional citizenship is something faculty ought to concern themselves with because without it they may not have a department to have a job in or resources to work with. Sessoms and Health (1993) uncovered several service-related reasons that were linked to the health and survival of university recreation units. Recreation and leisure studies departments that survived and thrived had: (a) centrality of mission (that is, clear alignment of recreation and leisure with the mission of the university); (b) curriculum that was perceived to be relevant to the institution's mission; (c) strong faculty/university relationships (faculty who were seen as good colleagues and who were not seen as complainers with chips on their shoulders and something to prove); (d) faculty presence on key university committees, and (e) strong leadership by recreation students across campus (this establishes how recreation majors are seen by others on campus). Godbey illustrated the importance of involvement in university-wide committees when he stated, "the faculty is the university and the university is the faculty" (as cited in Sessoms & Heath, 1993). Godbey explained that successful units had faculty who served on university priority committees, curriculum reform committees, and promotion and tenure committees. Thus, faculty earned the respect of the administration by interacting regularly with the administration. This author agrees that faculty should place time and energy into carefully chosen service initiatives at department, unit and university levels.

Specifically, at the department level, recreation faculty need to dedicate quality time to mission and curriculum. Faculty cannot afford to be without cohesive, connected missions or to be unknown to the powers that be at our universities. As faculty gain seniority, these roles should be extended into unit and university levels by accepting roles related to personnel, curriculum, faculty governance, and just about any committee making important decisions about the future of education, faculty roles and university structure and mission. Departments that have failed to make these connections at their home universities are being reduced and eliminated across the country. Therefore, good institutional citizenship is the job of all faculty in the department, new and tenured alike.

Disciplinary Citizenship

All faculty can and should participate in disciplinary citizenship because in doing so they are indirectly helping themselves. Being known as a leader opens opportunities for scholarship, and it cannot possibly hurt one's career to be seen by those outside of one's home institution as a person who gets things done. Suggestions for doing the work of organizations include being visible at meetings, offering to help out with committees, reviewing, and so on. The bridges one creates build social capital. Leadership to the profession can take many forms. Faculty should plan to start disciplinary citizenship early in their careers by seeking out less time consuming roles to make themselves known, thereby paving the way for assuming leadership roles later in their careers. Being involved in cross-disciplinary research, serving on boards of directors, editing or associate editing, can all open doors to unforeseen scholarship opportunities.

Not all disciplinary citizenship roles have scholarship potential but many do. Sometimes faculty have to take the leadership plunge, trusting that there will be a scholarship payoff without a clear vision of exactly what that payoff might be. Faculty can and should creatively examine potential disciplinary citizenship roles for pay-offs in potential scholarship. For example, as editor of the Research Update column in *Parks and Recreation Magazine* (a service appointment through Society of Park and Recreation Educators), this author worked directly with members of the leisure sciences academy, learned about up-to-date research in multiple venues, and published articles. Thus, while more senior faculty advised the author (who was, at the time, untenured) not to take this role because it would take too much time away from research, through strategic planning the author was able to use this particular role to both serve the profession and enhance her scholarship.

Civic Contributions

Civic contributions have much potential for creating connections that can have scholarship payoffs. While many civic roles will be accepted just for the sake of helping others, others can be strategically planned to yield scholarship outcomes. To the extent faculty choose roles carefully, and work with agencies to contract up-front for the value they will bring and personal gains they desire from their involvement, civic contributions can lead to outreach. For example, accepting a role on the board of directors for the local Boy's and Girl's Club could lead to involving one's programming students service learning, thus providing access to Boy's and Girl's Club participant's for a well-designed program outcome study.

Faculty who are weighing a decision about whether or not they can afford the time to get involved in a particular civic role may benefit from the following advice: when the faculty member needs to be producing scholarship, he or she needs to keep in mind what good scholarship entails (e.g. experimental design and good data col-

lection), and commit to only those service roles where a win-win situation is likely. Gaining *apriori* agreement on the goals and roles of all parties involved is crucial. When contracting service projects with community agencies, it is imperative to discuss *up front* topics such as goals, funding, comparison groups, data collection, ownership of data and plans for publication. Unless care is taken, community-based projects can become a huge time drain at the expense of one's teaching and research agendas with little for faculty to show in terms of what is valued by their faculty reward system. Knowledge and a coaching from a mentor can help prepare a faculty to decide which community engagement projects they should choose. In the author's case, she has assisted agencies with service learning projects and program evaluations when the agency is willing and able to provide reasonable assurance that a rigorous study will be possible.

Outreach

As faculty apply their expertise to community issues through academically relevant work, they participate in outreach thus contributing to the public good. As noted in the last part of this paper, outreach does not just happen, it is a carefully planned and conscious process that follows the guidelines of good scholarship. As faculty engage with community members to apply their academic expertise to challenges, they create many positive relationships. As previously stated, faculty need to spend time developing clear goals of significance to faculty, university, and community partners in order for the time spent on the project to make sense. As the faculty member progresses, he or she will be speaking and writing about the project, conducting and sharing formative evaluations, reflecting, and sharing outcomes as they evolve (Sandmann et al., 2000).

The Relevance of Outreach to Recreation and Leisure Studies.

Outreach should be enthusiastically embraced by recreation and leisure studies faculty. Diamond (1994) notes that faculty from traditional disciplines (i.e. the sciences and liberal arts) have taken longer to buy into outreach than those faculty who see themselves as members of disciplines whose work has been traditionally undervalued (e.g. disciplines like recreation and leisure studies and education). Therefore, outreach is especially attractive to professional studies disciplines because serious, applied work is the very essence of what they do. The following discussion highlights the essential link between the academic side of recreation and leisure studies and community service delivery.

Dustin (2000) clarified why faculty in recreation and leisure studies professions are very much in the business of applying research to solve real-life problems. Writing about professor Goodale at the time of his retirement, Dustin stated, some professors try to bridge the gap "between what is and what ought to be" (p. 112). Dustin elaborated: faculty in the sciences tend to see the world *as it is*, using the lens

of discovery; faculty in humanities tend to describe what *ought to be;* still other faculty, such as those in recreation and leisure (e.g. Dr. Goodale), try to bridge this gap. What can make the bridge scholarship is the way the gap is bridged.

As Dustin (2000) pointed out, quality connections between theory and real-world applications are not merely a matter of taste, preference, or opinion, but rather are argued on principle. This principle needs to be based on sound scientific and philosophical thought. Recreation and leisure studies faculty are bridge builders because their work is about improving the quality of peoples' lives through recreation and leisure experiences. It should be further noted that Dustin's discussion of bridge building bears strong similarity to the concept of outreach.

For outreach to become an accepted part of faculty scholarship reward systems, each profession needs to define its own outreach standards, and departments need to specify how these standards are applicable to their local situations. The final section of this paper provides suggestions for action at national and local levels in recreation and leisure studies.

Embracing Outreach in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Profession

Anyone preparing to engage in describing outreach should familiarize him or herself with core concepts by doing some background reading. First, Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* lays the foundation for a new paradigm of scholarship that recognizes a full range of scholarly activity and respond to urgent needs for more focus on teaching, application and integration. Second, Glassick et al's., (1997) *Scholarship Assessed* takes up where Boyer left off—they propose new standards for assessing scholarship and evaluating faculty with special emphasis on methods and documentation. Third, efforts organized by the American Association for Higher Education are documented in their publications by Diamond and Adam (1995, 2000), Driscoll and Lynton (1999), Lynton (1995), and Rice (2003). Fourth, Sandmann et al., (2000) discuss the tensions associated with faculty involved in outreach, as well as possible solutions for faculty who want to make outreach part of the reward structure at their institutions.

How Outreach can be Planned, Implemented and Evaluated within the Profession

National efforts aimed at reforming faculty-reward systems discovered that while all scholarship fits definable key standards, context-specificity is essential (Diamond, 1994; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999). In practice, this means professional associations need to create discipline specific standards, such as those published by the Association of College and Research Libraries Task Force on Institutional Priorities and Faculty Rewards (1998) and in Diamond and Adam's (1995, 2000) collections. Building on Wellman's (2004) proposal to create a national peer-review to promote scholarship of teaching and learning in recreation and leisure, this author proposes

that the Society of Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE) get involved in national forums to create a discipline specific statement describing outreach scholarship.

The next step is for individual institutions to prepare contextually derived descriptions of outreach that fit their individual history, priorities and circumstances (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Rice, 2003). An assessment checklist prepared by The National Academy for Academic Leadership (2002) provides a mechanism that can be used to drive this planning process. Sandmann et al. (2000) identified four tensions that have arisen as faculty took on the challenge of defining outreach scholarship at their institutions, including: significance, attention to context, impact and demonstrating the scholarship in outreach. Examples of how each tension was resolved provide a useful framework for institutions seeking to embrace this major cultural change.

The first challenge is developing goals of significance to both parties (university and community). A faculty's need for certainty must be balanced with the community's need for flexibility and ambiguity. This can be accomplished, in part, if all stakeholders can agree on the project's main goal. Second, faculty must ensure that their initiative makes sense in the community context. The only way to do this is to spend time in the community at regular intervals. Faculty maximized the value of this time by documenting and sharing their thinking about methods as the process evolved during the project through intermediate presentations and/or publications. Third, there is tension between community interests in resolving real-life issues and the university's need for publications, student learning, and enhanced university-community relationships. Faculty should keep in mind that legitimate, multiple products can be produced over the life of the project and make plans for doing so. Fourth, faculty can manage the tension associated with scholarship by demonstrating that their outreach work is truly scholarly. Standards set by the Clearinghouse and National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement (n.d.) can be utilized for guidance.

In *Scholarship Assessed,* Glassick et al., (1997) set forth the six key standards that scholarship of engagement must meet in order to honor the process of scholarship, including: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. These standards can be applied to any discipline or type of scholarship. The aforementioned Clearinghouse and National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement (n.d.) responds to the need for criteria and rigorous peer review of outreach scholarship.

The first standard concerns the goals, and considerations include questions such as "Does the scholar state the basic purpose of the work and its value for public good?" and "Does the scholar identify intellectual and significant questions in the discipline and in the community?" The second standard covers the context of theory, literature and best practices. Considerations include, "Does the scholar show an understanding of relevant existing scholarship?" and "Is the work intellectually compelling?" The third standard concerns methods. For example, "Does the scholar

[effectively] use methods appropriate to the goals, questions and context of the work?" The fourth standard describes qualities and standards results should meet. For example, "Does the scholar's work add consequentially to the discipline and the community?" The fifth standard explains how the work should be communicated and disseminated. For example, "Does the scholar communicate/disseminate to appropriate academic and public audiences consistent with the mission of the institution?" The sixth standard concerns the qualities of reflective critique. Here, the scholar must critically evaluate his or her work, show evidence of the sources informing the critique, and demonstrate how the evaluation was used to learn from and direct future work.

Throughout the outreach project, the scholar needs to document how he or she was involved in a local, state and/or national dialogue related to their work. The scholar can prepare a portfolio demonstrating how his or her scholarship meets these criteria and submit it for peer review and feedback (for sample portfolios see Driscoll & Lynton, 1999). Certainly peer reviewed journal articles sharing the results of outreach activities are also a viable product. These will be valued more highly in some professions than others, and for those professions who consider this type of publication to be of lesser value than peer reviewed publications based on traditional discovery, institutional efforts aimed at recognizing outreach can increase the perceived value of such publications.

The Current Status of Outreach in Recreation and Leisure Studies

Fortunately, faculty in recreation and leisure studies already have multiple venues for publishing peer reviewed articles on outreach scholarship. One example is Schole, where scholarship related to curriculum reform provides a forum for good ideas that are essential for keeping departments' curricula relevant (for example, see McGhee, Groff, Skalko, Riley & Russoniello, 2002; Parr, 1997). A second example is learn and serve projects where outcome data can be collected for both recreation students and service recipients (for example, see the *Michigan Journal of Service Learning*). A third example is the "Programs that Work" column in the *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. This list could go on. Virtually any applied research project where recreation faculty apply their expertise in manner consistent with good scholarship, while measuring outcomes, can already be turned into valued peer reviewed articles. That being said, institutional efforts aimed at reforming faculty reward systems to incorporate outreach scholarship will allow recreation departments to add other products, such as peer-reviewed portfolios, to the lists of items valued under their faculty reward systems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, faculty in recreation and leisure studies should strive for a more productive balance of teaching, research and service. Central to this change is the re-conceptualization of at least a portion of faculty's service activities as scholarly

outreach. Faculty cannot wait until after tenure and promotion to get more involved in service roles. They need to learn how scholarship and service can be two sides of the same coin in order to maximize service activity benefits. The survival of recreation and leisure studies departments, in increasingly complex university environments, remains uncertain and challenging. Recreation faculty can no longer afford to rely on their personal belief that they do valuable work. To meet this challenge, recreation faculty must consciously plan ahead to ensure their outreach efforts meet the highest scholarly standards. While we, as recreation faculty, *know* our work is essential to university outreach missions, we often lack mechanisms to document, communicate and reward this good work. Arguably, defining the role of outreach in university reward structures could be expected to elevate the centrality and status of recreation and leisure studies departments at their home institutions. Most departments are already doing good outreach, it is just not very valued or visible. In order for recreation departments to thrive, all faculty service involvement must become strategic so that it is visible, vital and integral to the work of their universities and communities. Leadership from SPRE is needed to develop a discipline specific description of outreach so departments can adapt it to their local situations. New faculty need to be mentored to lay the groundwork now for the professors they will become. This author believes faculty will find re-conceptualizing service as a critical and integral role throughout their careers rewarding in more ways than one.

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