



Dean - College of Business and STEM

Leadership Profile

October 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Robert Morris University (RMU) is seeking the dean for its newly formed College of Business and STEM. Launched in the Summer of 2024, the College of Business and STEM arose from RMU's strategic planning process and was enthusiastically accepted by students, faculty, and staff who are eager to be a part of RMU's bold new vision. The college is building an innovative and practical business and STEM education that will propel students into today's workforce.

Established in 1921, Robert Morris University is a career-oriented institution that offers a comprehensive student experience. Blending individualized academic assistance with hands-on learning opportunities, RMU helps students launch successful careers and fulfilling lives. The University is committed to lifelong career development and strives to become the preferred partner for professionals, corporations, and organizations throughout Pittsburgh and beyond. The beautiful campus is situated in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, surrounded by lush woodlands and rolling hills. The University educates over 3,800 students, including 2,900 undergraduates, across two newly formed colleges: the College of Business and STEM, and the College of Health and Human Sciences.

The appointment of an innovative and visionary President, Dr. Michelle Patrick, in 2022 and an experienced Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Joseph Zimmer, in 2023 has brought a new and dynamic energy to RMU. With the cabinet, this new leadership is reimagining the University and setting the stage for its second hundred years. As part of its strategic planning process, the Administration recently reorganized the University's academic divisions into two Colleges to be led by two experienced deans. Each College houses three academic schools. Department heads in each school report directly to the Dean. With this organization it is felt that the promotion, marketing and growth of the colleges, the schools and their programs will not be impeded.

While provisionally named the College of Business and STEM, it is anticipated that a more fitting name will be selected once the new dean is in place. The College consists of the Rockwell School of Business, the School of Engineering and Science, and the School of Data, Intelligence, and Technology. It will center and strengthen the business and STEM education as the foundation for academic innovation, interdisciplinary teaching and learning, and elevation of each student's potential.

The incoming dean will be an integral and vital part of RMU's leadership team, reporting directly to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The dean will cultivate the innovative and growth-minded culture of the College, serving as an adaptable and future-focused leader who can lead the College to respond to the changing world of higher education. They will champion student and faculty success in all they do, working collaboratively across campus to identify new partnerships. The dean will be a strong advocate for the College, engaging external partners on behalf of the College, stewarding and creating new relationships in the community that lead to philanthropic support, and learning and career opportunities for students.

The candidate will have a successful record of academic administrative leadership experience within a complex organization. The dean will be an authentic and passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion across student, faculty, and staff communities. They will be a strong listener and possess the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with all constituencies. The successful candidate will have earned a doctorate from an accredited institution in one of the academic disciplines in the College and possess the credentials that would qualify them for the rank of non-probationary professor in one of the departments of the College at the time of their appointment.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Dean - College of Business and STEM

As chief administrator of the College, the dean is responsible for all matters relating to its programs, personnel, facilities, and budget.

In addition to oversight of academic programs, the dean oversees the work of approximately 100 faculty and staff; leads internal and external communications with alumni, partners, and constituents; stewards donors and heads College development and fundraising; manages College facilities, program revenue, and budgets.

The dean is supported by vice, assistant and/or associate deans who will assist the dean in accomplishing the goals of all three schools. The dean reports to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Joseph Zimmer. In addition to functioning as a key leader on campus, the dean's primary responsibilities include the following key areas:

Academic Programs

In consultation with members of the leadership team and academic affairs, the dean:

- Maintains high quality academic and co-curricular programs and ensures continuous improvement, assessment, and review of these programs.
- Monitors course and enrollment data to ensure a curriculum that is high quality, efficient, and cost effective.
- Monitors the higher education marketplace and works with units on courses of action and emerging opportunities.
- Ensures successful professional accreditation for each of its programs.

Personnel leadership

- Provides leadership and coaching to each vice, assistant and/or associate dean, and department heads.
- Leads the College's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity.
- Recruits and retains high quality faculty and academic staff.
- Supports the professional development of faculty and academic staff.
- Makes recommendations to the provost on personnel decisions.
- Maintains up to date records for each school and for the College.

Advancement and external relations

In partnership with the advancement office, the dean:

- Provides support to major giving, annual giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation philanthropy, and alumni engagement.
- Is actively involved in donor cultivation, proposal creation, and gift stewardship.

- Ensures high ethical standards are followed in the stewardship and distribution of donor funds and scholarships.
- Seeks additional funding from outside agencies.
- Facilitates and encourages outreach, collaboration, and partnerships with regional partners, industries, and organizations.
- Acts as spokesperson for the College and programs with industry and community partners and with university administration.
- Communicates with donors, alumni, and others associated with the College.

Budget and facilities management

- Creates an annual budget for the College that is both strategic and equitable.
- Ensures a balanced, fiscally sound base budget through stable enrollments, tight fiscal management, low costs per student credit-hour (SCH), and disciplined control over primary cost drivers (administrative costs, class sizes, fill rates).
- Maintains state-of-the-art physical spaces and coordinates space upgrades and equipment replacements as needed.

Inclusion and Diversity

- Promotes and supports the University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) among the campus community.
- Recruits and retains diverse students.
- Recruits and retains a diverse workforce.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next dean of the College of Business and STEM will provide leadership in a number of critical areas including, but not limited to the following:

- **Establish and enact an ambitious vision for the College of Business and STEM**

The next dean will join the University at a perfect time to work with students, faculty, administrators, staff, and the RMU community to build a vision that aligns with the mission and values of the University. The dean is expected to have an understanding of the history, culture, and impact of the University and have an appreciation of the variety of disciplines represented in the College. With visionary leadership, the dean should prepare the College for the competitive forces at work in the disciplinary areas connected to the fields of business, engineering, technology, mathematics, and science in strategies that position the College for long-term success. The dean should also understand the value of a strong and positive reputation with a keen eye on elevating the profile of the College.

- **Cultivate relationships within the College and across the University**

Regardless of their academic background, the next dean should vigorously build relationships with faculty, administrators, and staff from each of the schools and departments within the College. The dean will be an active, enthusiastic, and collaborative relationship-builder with a demonstrated ability to draw upon these relationships to the benefit of the College and the University. The dean must recognize and celebrate the value of each school and discipline within the College and be able to understand and advocate for them individually, uniquely, and appropriately. The next dean will be creative, persistent, and enterprising in identifying and exploring new synergistic collaboration to integrate the College more fully and meaningfully.

- **Develop and implement strategies to advance enrollment and increase retention**

The dean must support and help deploy a focused enrollment management strategy that builds upon existing markets and continues to target new markets. RMU has a reputation as being keenly student-focused with a high degree of interaction between faculty and students. There is an emphasis on engaged and experiential learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. During a period of time when institutions across the country face declining demographic trends, the dean will work to solidify enrollment and retention efforts with a focus on value-enhancing experiences and identify where technology and new pedagogies can be leveraged to underwrite student success.

- **Champion a welcoming environment rooted in student success**

The new dean will support the University's commitment to student success by working with administrators, faculty, and staff to ensure high-quality academic offerings with intellectually rich experiences, and to enhance high-impact practices that produce transformational educational experiences for students. The dean will be student-focused and consider all decisions from the lens of what will best serve the College's students. They will foster an inclusive learning environment that serves all students, ensuring they have what they need to be successful in obtaining their degrees.

- **Invest in faculty and staff development, foster a culture of shared governance**

The dean will be forward-thinking in their effort to attend to the professional development needs of both faculty and staff of the College. The new dean will assume the deanship after a significant change, both from the pandemic where faculty and staff have been stretched to meet evolving demands to ensure student success, and from recent leadership and organizational transitions. The dean will need to be a collaborative and servant leader who can explore creative ways to support a culture where faculty and staff are enabled and empowered to do their best work. Efforts to listen and understand recent challenges and to respond with creative solutions will be welcome. The dean's outreach will affect faculty and staff retention, helping to ensure talented and dedicated personnel feel valued and continue to thrive at the College. RMU places a high

value on shared governance. Faculty at the University are represented by the Robert Morris University Faculty Federation which is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers.

- **Foster curricular innovation that meets today's students and the world's needs**

The dean plays a critical role in working with students, faculty, administrators, and staff to identify opportunities to innovate the distinctive curriculum at the College that provides students with a rigorous, holistic, and impactful academic experience that prepares them for life after graduation. This individual needs to be adept at listening, gathering information, and making data-informed decisions. The dean has an opportunity to work with constituents to envision the future of academic programs and ensure that the curriculum is relevant and aligns with market demands.

- **Effectively manage existing College resources and seek opportunities for resource generation to support the College's new and ongoing initiatives**

The dean is expected to manage the College's existing resources and increase additional resources through strategic enrollment and retention initiatives, as well as assist in the pursuit of external funding sources that align with the College's goals and priorities. The dean is a strong advocate for resources within the University and is also expected to develop new resources through grants, philanthropic efforts, and other creative sources. The next dean must have the ability to be a driven fundraiser with an eagerness to build strong relationships with existing and future supporters of the RMU community.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The dean of the College of Business and STEM will report directly to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and be an integral and vital part of Robert Morris University's leadership team. As such, the ideal candidate will have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- Earned doctorate from an accredited institution in one of the academic disciplines in the College.
- Evidence of scholarly or professional achievement that will merit a non-probationary (tenured) faculty appointment at the level of professor in one of the academic disciplines of the College.
- Experience in obtaining initial and/or maintaining existing accreditation in at least one of the accreditations held by the College.
- Experience in developing and managing a budget and aligning it with the strategic priorities and mission of the College.
- Experience in the promotion and advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with all constituencies, particularly with regional communities.
- Ability to be the College's ambassador and foster partnerships among academic, business, health care, education, and other constituents.

The ideal candidate will have the following preferred professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- Served in senior leadership at the level of dean or above.
- Experience with external fundraising.
- Understanding of the dynamics of a collective bargaining environment and the potential to work effectively in that environment.
- Understanding of the culture, opportunities, and challenges associated with a regional, private, independent university.
- Ability to create a shared vision, lead change, and successfully implement strategic priorities.



About the College of Business and STEM

In 2024, the University reorganized its four schools into two colleges with three schools each to better promote, market, and raise awareness of their respective academic programs. The chief outcomes of this reorganization have significantly flattened the organization, made it more agile, created more collaborative and creative opportunities within and among the schools, and allowed the deans to pool and maximize the use of resources over three schools instead of one. With the help of the provost and assistant and/or associate deans, the new deans will each have the opportunity to lead the three schools in their charge to greater visibility, enhanced enrollments, and student success.

The Rockwell School of Business

RMU's Rockwell School of Business is educating tomorrow's business leaders. Faculty members know from experience the professional and ethical demands of the modern corporate workplace. Programs combine communication skills with discipline-specific knowledge and leverage technology through the PNC Trading Center, the U.S. Steel Videoconferencing and Technology Resource Center, and the ATI Center.

The Rockwell School of Business is accredited by AACSB, the premier global accrediting agency for business schools. In 2022, Robert Morris University added a new standard of quality to its impressive reputation in business education with the accreditation of its accounting program by AACSB International. The supplemental accounting accreditation from AACSB signifies RMU's commitment to strategic management, learner success, thought leadership, and societal impact of its accounting program. In addition, the accounting program is endorsed by the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) for its rigorous curriculum that prepares students for the CMA exam and successful careers in management accounting.

Departments

- [Accounting and Taxation](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Management](#)
- [Marketing](#)

School of Data, Intelligence, and Technology

In RMU's School of Data, Intelligence, and Technology, students are immersed in cutting-edge programs that prepare them for careers in a variety of rapidly evolving fields. Undergraduate programs that prepare them for careers in a variety of rapidly evolving fields. Undergraduate programs in Computer Information Systems, Computer Science, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Actuarial Science, Mathematics, Statistics and Data Science, and Criminal Justice provide a solid foundation in technology and data analysis. Graduates are equipped for roles such as software developers, cybersecurity analysts, data scientists, actuaries, and criminal justice professionals. Our focus on innovation and practical application ensures that students are at the forefront of technological advancements.

Bachelor's degree programs in Cyber Forensics & Information Security, Information Sciences, and Computer Information Systems are ABET-CAC accredited.

RMU is designated as a Center of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries and a National Center of Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the DHS and NSA.

Departments

- [Computer Information Systems](#)
- [Mathematics](#)

School of Engineering and Sciences

RMU's School of Engineering and Science offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs to prepare students for success in such fields as engineering, biology, and environmental science. Faculty members have extensive industry experience that informs their teaching and provides students with problem-solving knowledge and skills. The school is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in STEM education, with high-tech facilities, corporate partnerships, and a rock-solid alumni network. The undergraduate Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering degree programs are accredited by ABET.

Departments

- [Engineering](#)
- [Science](#)



About Robert Morris University

Overview

Robert Morris University is located on 230 acres in Moon Township, PA., five minutes from Pittsburgh International Airport and approximately 20 minutes west of downtown Pittsburgh.

Classes at RMU blend general education requirements with professionally focused courses that emphasize strong communications skills and prepare students for careers in such fields as business, education, information technology, engineering, and healthcare. For the Class of 2023, the last year for which complete data is available, 97 percent of bachelor's degree recipients who are employed are working in the field of their choice.

Approximately half of full-time undergraduate students (and 73 percent of freshmen) live in university housing. Among the University's 179 full-time instructional faculty, 94 percent hold terminal degrees. While the faculty teaching load is 4-4, assigned time to support scholarship is available and regularly used by many faculty; in fact, RMU places considerable emphasis on the scholarly contributions of its faculty and provides opportunity for course load reduction related to research endeavors. Robert Morris faculty also are deeply engaged in providing experiential learning opportunities for students, and the University places great emphasis on providing students with faculty and staff mentors.

All full-time teaching faculty are represented under a collective bargaining agreement with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The relationship between the AFT and Robert Morris is characterized by most as a positive one where cooperation and collaboration prevail.

RMU is among the more affordable private institutions in Pennsylvania, and its cost of attendance is lower than the University of Pittsburgh and Penn State once financial aid is taken into consideration. Tuition, room and board is approximately \$49,100 per year, with more than 93 percent of full-time undergraduate students receiving financial aid in the form of grants, loans, scholarships, or work-study jobs.

Mission

Through professionally focused educational programs, extraordinary experiences, and a supportive community, RMU students are challenged, inspired, and transformed into career-ready individuals.

Vision

RMU changes lives by empowering students to achieve their potential.

A Private Comprehensive Institution

Robert Morris University is a career-focused institution that provides a complete student experience, combining personalized academic support with engaged learning activities that launch students into great careers and great lives. Dedicated to lifelong career development, RMU aims to be a preferred strategic partner for professionals, corporations, and other organizations in the Pittsburgh region and beyond.

Situated on a wooded, gently rolling campus in suburban Pittsburgh, RMU hosts more than 3,800 students (including 2,900 undergraduates) who are educated in one of two Colleges: the College of Business and STEM and the College of Health and Human Science.

Athletics are a strong component of student life at RMU, which currently offers 17 NCAA Division I sports. During the past 10 years, the men's and women's basketball teams each have made multiple appearances in the NCAA tournament. Both teams now compete, along with RMU's NCAA Division I volleyball team, at the UPMC Events Center.

RMU's Namesake

Though Robert Morris the man has no formal connection to the institution, Robert Morris University has embraced the role its namesake played in winning America's independence from England. Morris, who was one of Pennsylvania's first senators, signed the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. RMU's sports teams are nicknamed the Colonials, and many campus buildings are named for founding fathers and other men and women who made pivotal contributions to American independence. A statue on campus, known as Bronze Bob, commemorates the University's namesake and provides a popular photo spot.

A History of Transformation

Throughout its history, Robert Morris University has evolved to meet the changing demands of the higher education market and the professional workforce of western Pennsylvania—all while staying true to its consistent values and mission.

RMU was founded in 1921 as the Pittsburgh School of Accountancy by Andrew Blass in response to what he saw as a shortage of accountants in the local economy. In 1935, the school's President, Richard Khuen III, changed the name of the institution to the Robert Morris School of Business to reflect the institution's broadening range of academic programs and to honor the founding father known as the financier of the American revolution.

After leasing space at several other Pittsburgh locations, including downtown's famed William Penn Hotel, Robert Morris purchased a building of its own in 1959, the Rust Engineering Building at 600 Fifth Ave. in downtown Pittsburgh. Three years later, Robert Morris acquired the summer estate and farm of Pittsburgh department store executive Oliver Kaufmann in Moon Township in order to build its first residential campus. The first students on campus lived in the Kaufmann mansion, where now sits Massey Hall, across from the estate's original gardens. Today, over 1,500 students live in 13 residence halls.

In 1961, Robert Morris became a nonprofit institution so that it could become a junior college, a change necessitated by a decision of the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants to require candidates for the CPA exam to earn a college degree. The following year, the name of the school changed to Robert Morris Junior College, and then, in 1969, it became Robert Morris College.

Robert Morris continued to grow throughout the next three decades, expanding to include graduate degree programs and adding more bachelor's programs as well. In 1977, Robert Morris joined the NCAA Division I for interscholastic athletics.

In 2002, following approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the school became Robert Morris University. In 2010, RMU sold its building in downtown Pittsburgh in the midst of a major expansion of its residential campus in Moon Township. Today the University offers 36 undergraduate degrees and majors, 17 master's programs, and four doctoral programs, as well as 20 fully online degree programs.

The Student Experience

Robert Morris University's recent history has been marked by its transformation from a regional commuter college to a nationally recognized, comprehensive doctoral university where the majority of freshmen live on campus as well as approximately half of all full-time undergraduate students. The shift in focus towards residential life on the 230-acre scenic suburban campus led to a significant expansion of Student Life programming to foster a dynamic living and learning environment.



A rich variety of clubs, organizations, and other activities help students to thrive in and out of the classroom. No matter their interests or career goals, students can find any number of opportunities for engagement outside the classroom, from the Top Secret Colonials for cybersecurity students to RMU's award-winning student chapter of the American Marketing Association to Colonial Theatre to the Mechatronics Engineering Club to 12 fraternities and sororities. RMU has become well-known for its expansive club sports program, featuring 23 teams with over 400 club sports athletes. Club sports include ice hockey, bowling, and rugby, as well as esports.

The Center for Global Engagement and Office of Multicultural Student Services promote study abroad and other international education opportunities, while fostering a diverse and inclusive campus community. International students are welcomed and encouraged to feel at home at RMU and are among the campus's most engaged student leaders. In addition, the University's Student Engagement Program affords students numerous opportunities for internships and other professional experiences, community service, scholarly research, campus leadership, and more, giving RMU students a competitive edge in applying for jobs and admission to graduate schools.

Leadership

Michelle Patrick, President

Dr. Patrick was named president on July 6, 2022, and is the first woman to serve as RMU president. She had briefly served as interim president after six years as dean of the RMU School of Business. The culture of change and innovation that Dr. Patrick sparked as dean of the School of Business is typified by the transformation of the MBA program, [which was recently ranked No. 15 in the nation among online MBA programs by Fortune Magazine](#). Under Dr. Patrick's leadership, the business school achieved reaffirmation of its prestigious AACSB accreditation; developed innovative new certificate and degree programs; launched the [Center for Sales Excellence](#) and the [Rockwell Fellowship in Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#); and re-established the [Massey Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#). Each of these initiatives provides students with valuable real-world experiences and have strengthened RMU's ties to the regional business community.

Prior to joining RMU, Dr. Patrick served as dean of the College of Business and Public Management at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Patrick was a key figure in a \$35 million capital campaign to fund a new academic building for the business college. She also oversaw a redesign of West Chester's online M.B.A. program, which resulted in it being ranked by U.S. News and World Report for the first time.

Before joining West Chester's marketing faculty in 2003, she was a member of the marketing faculty at the University of North Carolina at Asheville beginning in 1995. Dr. Patrick has a B.S. and M.B.A. in marketing, both from Youngstown State University, and a Ph.D. in marketing from Kent State University. She has been published widely on the topic in scholarly literature. Dr. Patrick and her husband, Ron, live in Sewickley.

Joseph Zimmer, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Zimmer joined RMU in June 2023, from St. Bonaventure University where he has served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs since 2015. In his role as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at St. Bonaventure, Dr. Zimmer led a period of significant growth that established its School of Health Professions, added 25 new majors and graduate programs, and increased its online graduate student population from 40 students in 2015 to over 650 students in 2022. Dr. Zimmer also served as interim president from 2021-2022 providing steadfast leadership for his institution during some of the most challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to serving as Provost at St. Bonaventure, Dr. Zimmer taught in the University's School of Education for 22 years. Served as its Dean from 2011-2015 and has authored numerous publications in the field of reading. Dr. Zimmer earned his bachelor's degree in English with a minor in teacher education, a master's in English Education, and his doctorate in Reading Education from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



The Pittsburgh Region

With nearly 2.4 million residents, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area is the largest population center in both the Ohio River Valley and Appalachia. The city lies 50 miles west of the Allegheny Mountains and is centered at the Point, where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet to form the Ohio River.

The city traces its origins to a succession of forts built by French and then English forces in the 1750s during the French and Indian War. The rivers flowing through Pittsburgh made it easy to ship goods into and out of the city, and during the Industrial Revolution, Pittsburgh became a hub of commerce and manufacturing. By the time of the Civil War, Pittsburgh boasted nearly 1,000 factories. Steel production became the city's chief industry in the late 1800s, and Pittsburgh experienced several decades of growth and prosperity. But the U.S. steel industry shrank in the late 1970s, and Pittsburgh's wealth and population began to decline.

Pittsburgh has recovered from the collapse of its steel mills. The city has rebuilt itself and developed new industries, and today it is a recognized leader in the financial sector, medicine and healthcare, and high-tech fields including robotics, artificial intelligence, and software engineering.

Because of its low cost of living, low crime rate, wide selection of cultural and entertainment venues, and attractive natural surroundings, Pittsburgh is consistently voted one of the most livable cities in the country.

The city itself is renowned for its scenic beauty. New York Times architecture critic Paul Goldberger has called it "the only city in America with an entrance," referring to the moment visitors emerge from the Fort Pitt Tunnel to encounter "a skyline of striking power." Two historic inclines climb the steep ridge called Mount Washington, offering passengers sweeping views from its summit.

Pittsburgh offers entertainment and cultural opportunities on par with many major cities. Stadiums for the Steelers and Pirates and an arena for the Penguins are walking distance from the downtown business district. The city is home to more than 200 museums and art galleries, including the world-famous Carnegie complex of museums

and the funky Andy Warhol Museum. The cultural district features live theater, music, and dance, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Pittsburgh Opera, and the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

Career opportunities are abundant. Pittsburgh is home to several Fortune 500 companies, 250 international corporations, one of the country's largest banks, and a health system ranked in the nation's top 10.



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Robert Morris University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 22, 2025.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Jeff Compher and Julia Bradley

RMUBusinessSTEMDean@wittkieffer.com

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