HORIZONS

Expanding Horizons in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Sponsored by the National Science Foundation

Welcome to our 2023-24 Issue Great News: Awarded Five More Years!

New Mexico Alliance for Minority Participation STEM Pathways for Research Alliances (SPRA) has been serving community college and university students in the State of New Mexico for thirty-one years. We are very happy to announce that we have been funded for five more years (2024-2029), starting July 1, 2024! We are so excited to continue serving underrepresented (URM) students in the state. Our focused theme for our research programs, including the Undergraduate Research Scholars, STEM PREP, and the Summer Community College Opportunity for Research Experience, will be Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience, which will target research for students in STEM disciplines. This focus will be for the 5-year funding period.

SAVE THE DATE!! The NM AMP Conference will be held October 4, 2024!

Our first conference for the NM AMP SPRA 2024-2029 will be held at the NMSU Corbett Center on Friday, October 4 from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. To get a good idea of what our conference will look like, we have included a review of the last NM AMP Conference, held on October 13, 2023, which follows. In this five-year period, our focus will be on Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience.

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2023 New Mexico AMP Student Research Conference

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Conference Attendees Student Presenters



Conference Attendees

The 2023 NM AMP Student Research Conference, held on October 13th, 2023, brought together students and researchers from various fields in New Mexico. Attendees engaged in lively poster presentations, workshops, and discussions; fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing. Distinguished keynote speakers provided insights and inspiration, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and scientific curiosity. The event also offered valuable networking opportunities, manifesting connections among students, professors, and professionals. This conference celebrated the diverse and impactful research conducted in New Mexico, providing a glimpse into the bright future of academic endeavors in the region.

Two hundred-thirteen attendees were present for the 2023 New Mexico Alliance for Minority Participation (New Mexico AMP) Student Research Conference. This number included university and community college students and faculty, in addition to high school juniors, seniors, and advisors from New Mexico Math, Engineering, Science and Achievement (New Mexico MESA) program. The statewide event took place on October 13th at the Las Cruces Convention Center.

AMP Director, Jeanne Garland, kicked off the event by welcoming attendees to the conference and providing an overview of the New Mexico AMP Program. Director Garland introduced our new Co-PI, Dr. Paola Bandini, Wells-Hatch Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at New Mexico State University, to the New Mexico AMP team. Dr. Bandini then shared a few words of motivation, and the importance of mentors for the STEM students in attendance. She received her M.S and Ph.D. degrees in civil engineering from Purdue University. She is a Co-Principal Investigator and the Thrust Lead for Infrastructure Construction of the Center for Biomediated and Bio-inspired Geotechnics (CBBG), a National Science Foundation (NSF) Engineering Research Center. She has 20+ years of teaching and research experience in geotechnical engineering. She holds a patent for bio-inspired deep foundations and anchors. Her current research interests are in the development of biogeotechnologies for deep foundations and anchors, ground improvement, erosion control, and sustainable earthen construction.



Dr. Paola Bandini

Director Garland later introduced Dr. Alan Shoho. Chief Academic Officer of New Mexico State University, as our new Principal Investigator (PI) of New Mexico AMP. Dr. Shoho a welcome to the university and to AMP. Prior to coming to NMSU, Dr. Shoho served as Dean and Professor Emeritus of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for five years. He was also Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support at the University of Texas at San Antonio for twenty-one years. He started his career in higher education as an assistant professor in the University of Portland's School of Education in 1991. Previously, he worked as a high school math teacher in Hawaii after working as an electrical engineer for Hughes Aircraft Company and Rockwell International.



Dr. Alan Shoho

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Ben Flores, the Forrest O. and Henrietta Lewis Professor of electrical engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), was our Breakfast Keynote Speaker, with an inspiring speech about the importance of staying up-to-date with



politics as well as his personal journey to success. He also noted the importance of AMP; where the continuing support of students in STEM could have great, lasting impacts on the world. Dr. Flores joined UTEP in 1990 after earning his Ph.D. from

Arizona State University. He is the PI and Director

of the University of Texas System Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, an alliance of 14 institutions committed to increasing the number of underrepresented minority students who pursue STEM careers. He is also the PI of the Louis Stokes Bridge to the Doctorate, a program that mentors STEM doctoral students from underrepresented groups. In the role of Co-PI of another, the NSF INCLUDES Program cooperative agreement, Dr. directs West Texas the Regional Collaborative, a consortium of universities and community colleges dedicated to preparing a diverse future faculty for careers at community colleges. Dr. Flores was the first in his family to earn a college degree, and even graduated Summa Cum Laude. His experience as an undergraduate researcher, first in chemistry and then in electrical engineering, which had a profound impact on his career choices.

The Honorable New Mexico State Representative Joseph Sanchez, District 40, gave the Luncheon Keynote address. He shared enlightening stories about his experience growing up in New Mexico, and stressed the importance of perseverance and dedication, inspiring the audience

to always shoot for their goals, no matter how big or small. He outlined the benefit of students in STEM staying in New Mexico, since there are great industry opportunities that could use minds eager to drive innovation forward. Representative Sanchez



earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of New Mexico, an M.B.A. from New Mexico State University, and an M.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of New Mexico. His career experience includes his work as an Electrical Engineer and Engineering Manager with Los Alamos National Laboratory and as the General Manager and CEO of the Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative.

Advisory Board Meeting

The Advisory Board Meeting was held at the Conference, with 15 advisors attending from institutions, national labs, various statewide programs, and industry. Provost/PI Alan Shoho presided as Chair, welcoming the advisors and announcing the selection of two Co-PIs, Dr. Paola Bandini, CE Professor and Dr. Stephanie Arnett, Sociology Professor, as Co-PI and Lead of the SS research project. The Advisory Board Working groups with topics on DEI, Sustainability, and Institutionalization, reported on contributions to the proposal. The Director gave an update on proposal progress. The Bridge to the Baccalaureate (B2B) representative then gave a very brief update on the "separate but alignedz' program to explain the changes in focus in each proposal. Then Dr. Bandini led a discussion on Faculty Mentor Development Training. The Data Analyst presented updates on 22-23 data progress; the NM AMP Evaluator presented the Evaluation Plan; and the SSRT presented updates on the outcomes of the research Progress for this reporting period. Dr. Shoho adjourned the meeting.



IC Meeting

The IC Meeting at the 2023 Conference was attended by all of the Institutional Coordinators (ICs) at the 13 institutions, including the 7 university and the 6 community college ICs. These annual meetings at the conference are always two hours long, and we

discuss such items as deadlines of the programs for the spring, development of programs, challenges they are facing in their programs, and their successes and accomplishments. Many shared their need for more understanding about how the renewed continuing grant would work, should we be awarded, and we discussed that at length with the discussion of a facilitated discussion of "The future of NM AMP: Shift in Thinking About Our Alliance": (How it affects their roles as IC; Why the thematic topic of Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience; How we ensure no students are left behind; and How we recruit for our research programs with this theme.) The discussion was productive, and the ICs had some great ideas for disseminating the information to the mentors, who will then contact students in their disciplines. As has been repeated previously, we have received commitments from many faculty at our university institutions to work with students, so the approach of contacting those committed mentors is the best approach until our program thematic topic is more established and more familiar to students. The meeting was adjourned, so the ICs could move to the next event, the Ice Cream Social and the announcement of the winners of the poster competition.

Conference Workshops

Attendees of the conference were provided a choice of two of three workshops:

The first workshop was entitled, "The Ethical Risks of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)" by Gustavo Piña, DACC professor of Computer & Information Technologies. Mr. Piña is a Professor of Computer Information Technology at Doña Ana Community College. An industry vet, Mr. Piña has over two decades of experience working with IT and as an educator. He is a motivational speaker and tech mentor who is passionate about helping people break into the industry through career advice and actionable content. Mr. Piña teaches various courses, from Networking to Windows Server Administration to Cybersecurity. He is also Faculty Advisor for CSEC student club, an active faculty member in Government Association (SGA), representative on NMSU Faculty Senate, Faculty

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Mentor for SkillsUSA, and liaison for dual-credit students in Gadsden ISD.



Gustavo Piña Presenting his Workshop

Mr. Piña's workshop covered how Artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to increase the effectiveness of discriminatory measures, such as racial profiling, behavioral prediction, and even the identification of someone's sexual orientation. The ethical questions raised by AI call for legislation to ensure it is developed responsibly.

The second workshop was entitled. "Graduate Degrees: The What, Why and How to Get There" by Marko Mohlenhoff, Director of TRIO McNair Scholars Program. An alumnus of Cornell University and Colorado State University, Mr. Mohlenhoff comes to the McNair Scholars Program of the Conroy Honors College at New Mexico State University having served in numerous Student Affairs roles at prior institutions. He brings his community college and university experience as a former Outreach Coordinator, TRIO Student Support Services Director, and Student Affairs Basic Needs Case Manager to supporting the talented participants of the McNair program as they engage in undergraduate research and prepare to transition to graduate and doctoral education. Having been a firstgeneration, low-income college student himself, he is proud and humbled to bear witness to the potential and the achievements of NMSU's McNair Scholars.

Mr. Mohlenhoff's workshop was for those who were passionate about learning and curious about continuing their education after their bachelor's degree. This presentation was an accessible way to learn more about the Master's and Doctoral Degrees; addressed how to make the most of time in college, and identified key considerations

of the grad school application process to shed light on a successful path forward to the graduate degree.



Marko Mohlenhoff Presenting his Workshop

The third workshop entitled. was "Electrochemistry sustainability: for green hydrogen, electro-organic synthesis, and electron sponges" by Dr. Scott Folkman, Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at New Mexico State University. Dr. Folkman was born and raised in Albuquerque, NM. He went to Northern Arizona State University for his undergraduate studies and completed a B.S. in biochemistry in 2013. Dr. Folkman then went to Colorado State University where he studied materials, inorganic, and electrochemistry. He later completed the Ph.D in 2018. After Colorado, he moved to Tarragona, Spain where he worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the chemical institute of Catalonia (ICIQ). After Spain, he accepted a position as an assistant professor at New Mexico State University, which he started in August of 2023.



Dr. Scott Folkman Presenting his Workshop

Dr. Folkman's workshop outlined how climate change and industrial pollution are prominent challenges in our pursuit for a sustainable and prosperous future are. Electrochemistry is the

field of chemistry wherein the electrochemical potential (driving force) at the surface of an electrode can be controlled and used to drive reactions and store/extract energy. Electrochemistry is already critical to our modern way of life, with Li-ion batteries powering laptops, smart phones, and electric vehicles and industrial processes such as the chlor-alkali process being fundamental to our production of chemicals at a global scale. This workshop covered three aspects of electrochemistry when applied to sustainability: green hydrogen, electro-organic synthesis, and electron sponges.

Additionally, a workshop tailored for faculty only was presented, entitled, "Dairy wastewater treatment by algal technology at Eastern New Mexico University" by Dr. Juchao Yan, from Eastern New Mexico University. Dr. Yan is a Professor of Chemistry, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair of Physical Sciences. He teaches Analytical Chemistry at both undergraduate and graduate levels and Forensic Chemistry at an undergraduate level. He was a Postdoctoral Associate and then a Research Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico. In December 1997, he earned his Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. His research interests have been in the fields of direct ethanol fuel cells, algal wastewater treatment, and organic solar cells. His research has been supported by NSF, DOE, and EPSCoR.



Dr. Juchao Yan Presenting his Workshop

Dr. Yan's faculty workshop explained how cost-effective and sustainable wastewater management solutions are urgently needed to address the climate change and to increase the resilience of water in New Mexico. This workshop first introduces the theme of the proposed student

research topic for the NM AMP STEM Pathways and Research Alliance: "Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience." Then, it focused on the Dr. Yan's research, which explains algal dairy wastewater treatment on an outdoor, pilot-scale Algal Turf Scrubberâ, with the ultimate goals of developing rural bioeconomy and of helping the dairy community achieve the Net Zero Initiative by 2050.

Mentor of the Year

NM AMP Mentors of the Year are announced each year at the NM AMP Student Research Conference. For 2023-24, the Mentors of the Year were Dr. Drew Davis, Professor of Wildlife Biology, Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) and Dr. Jo Latorre, Associate Professor, Dona Ana Community College (DACC). These outstanding mentors give selflessly of their time and effort to assist and mentor NM AMP students. Dr. Latorre teaches Chemistry, and in some classes conducts a Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE), and Dr. Davis teaches and is a URS Faculty mentor.



Dr. Latorre Receiving Award from Program Coordinator Sr. Justin Karrenberg

NM Mesa and TRIO Upward BOUND

An important component of the NM AMP's Annual Conference is hosting a group of high school students in the New Mexico Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement (NM MESA) and TRIO Bound GIDS/LCPS students. Anita Upward Gonzalez, the NM MESA Deputy Director and Luz Gurrola, NMSU's TRIO Upward Bound Program Director, presented an overview of NM AMP and the conference. Anita Gonzales, a native New Mexican, was born in Las Vegas, NM to both the Lopez Family of Villanueva, NM and the Gallegos Family of Las Vegas, NM. A middle child, Anita moved between Las Vegas and Albuquerque and graduated high school from West Mesa High School. After completing much of her degree at Texas A&M University, she returned home to Las Vegas, NM to complete the bachelor's and master's degrees at New Mexico Highlands University. Anita has worked at NM MESA for over 17 years – an organization that empowers and motivates New Mexico's culturally diverse students with science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) enrichment. Professor Emeritus, Luz Gurrola, is the Director of NMSU's TRIO Upward Bound GISD/LCPS Program. She has been with TRIO Upward Bound for the past five years. She received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a minor in mathematics and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from New Mwxico State University. Before working with TRIO Upward Bound, Ms. Gurrola was Professor in the Mathematics and Physical Sciences Program of the General Studies Division at DACC. She retired from NMSU-DACC after having provided extensive services to the community college for 30 years.

In their own program, each year, the New Mexico MESA students are posed an engineering problem on which they competed to solve. NM AMP aids in tailoring conference materials for the morning and afternoon.



NM MESA Activity

Community College Professional Development Conference Workshop

Seventeen (17) community college students from partner institutions attended the Professional Development Workshops the day before and the day after the conference. These pre- and post- conference workshops helped the community college students make the most of the conference experience. Students from six (6) community colleges attended these workshops, which were: Central New Mexico Community College, Doña Ana Community College, Luna Community College, NMSU-Alamogordo Community College, and Santa Fe Community College, and San Juan Community College.



Professional Development Looking at Saturday's Eclipse

On Saturday, October 12th, the Professional Development Workshop was facilitated by Michael Voergerl, Manager for Community Education and Workforce Development at UNM-Valencia. Mr. Voegerl works hard to ensure that students of New Mexico have opportunities to pursue their education when and where they want and makes sure that they are prepared for the careers they want to pursue. Dr. Terry Cook, Ed.D, consultant at CT Education and Consulting, led the Faculty Development Workshop on Saturday morning. Dr. Cook is sole proprietor of CT Education Evaluation & Consulting Services, providing grant writing support to higher education in New Mexico and California. She is an NMSU retiree who served as the Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement. She began collaborating with the NM AMP Program in the mid-1990's, aiding the development of the curriculum and serving as one of the first Science, Math, Engineering & Technology (SMET 101) Instructors. Currently serving on the NM AMP Advisory Board, she was on the team for proposal development of the Community College Bridge to the Baccalaureate (B2B) Proposal. The first person in her family to earn a degree, she received her doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of New Mexico in 2009 and holds a California lifetime Community College Teaching Credential.

Poster Presentations

Undergraduate Students at the conference had the opportunity to present their research projects in poster format (Poster Presentations), with a total of 35 projects presented. There were presentations by community college students and university students, including participants of CBBG, S-STEM. ReNUWIt/SCCORE, REinWESR/SCCORE, and McNair Scholars. These students presented their research to judges, faculty, and other attendees. Judges were gathered and trained to score each presentation. After the presentation sessions, the points of the scored rubrics were counted up to determine the winners of the Poster Presentations for this year.

The awards for the presentations were provided in two categories: University and Community College students. In the category of

University poster presentations, awardees included the following: First Place, **Hiram Camarena** from New Mexico State University for his research entitled "Relationship Between Pax7+ Cells and Developing Muscle and Electric Organ Cells Within a Regenerating Blastema;" Second Place, **Amber Diaz** from New Mexico State University, for her research entitled, "Development of a Kalman Filter for Attitude Determination and Control of a Satellite Mission;" Third Place, **Josef Weese** from Northern New Mexico College, won with his presentation entitled "A Theoretical and Artistic Examination of Euclid's Elements."

In the category of Community College poster presentations, awardees included the following: First Place, Alison Lamery from San Juan College, for her research entitled, "Aggressive Behavior in Drosophila;" Second Place, Daniela Garcia from Doña Ana Community College, for her research entitled, "Synthetic Studies Towards Constructing Meleucanthin-A an Anticancer Agent;" Third Place, Briana Diaz from New Mexico State University - Alamogordo, for her research entitled, "Additive Manufacturing Onyx Material Testing."



University Winners: Josef Weese, Amber Diaz, Hiram Camarena



Community College Winners: Allison Lamery, Daniella Garcia, Briana Diaz

NM AMP Student Advisory Board, 2023-24

The Student Advisory Board is comprised of students from our community college and university partners. The following students were a few of the students who participated as NM AMP Student Advisors for 2023-24: Daniela Garcia, from DACC; Jeremy A. Sanchez, from SFCC; Brianna Diaz, from NMSU-A; and Josef Weese, from NNMC. On a rotational basis, NM AMP Partner Institutions select Student Advisors to assist the Institutional Coordinators (IC's) with recruitment, important feedback, and attendance at events to represent NM AMP. The Student Advisor serves as a role model for other students and helps to spread the good news about NM AMP and its opportunities through recruitment events and participation in the institution's NM AMP programs during the school year.

The following profiles some of the participants on the Board:

Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) Student Advisor: Josef Weese

Josef Weese is the Student Advisor for Northern New Mexico College. Josef is 24 years old and originally from Pojoaque, New Mexico. He is a senior at Northern New Mexico College studying Information Engineering Technology. Along with being a math tutor at NNMC and a STEM mentor at K-12 schools in the Espanola Valley, he has been



working with his mentor, Charles Knight, for many semesters on a project researching Euclid's Elements. They have produced many 2D and 3D art pieces that have been shown at exhibitions various including the Taos Town Hall and the Abiquiu Inn. A paper

and 3D art piece based from their research, was accepted into the Bridges 2019 Math Art Conference in Linz, Austria. Some of Josef's hobbies include theatre, performing music, and snowboarding.

New Mexico State University Alamogordo Community College (NMSU-A) Student Advisor: Briana Diaz

Briana Diaz is the Student Advisor for NMSU-Alamogordo. She is pursuing a degree in Engineering Technology with a focus on Electronics and Biomedical Equipment. She is proud of her service as the President of the NMSU-A STEM Club

since last fall 2022, when she had the opportunity to foster a passion for science and technology among her peers, as well as in her local community. In 2023-24, she took on the role of a math peer tutor, helping her peers excel in their math studies, which has also



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allowed her to be further involved on campus and outreach. Thanks to her involvement, she is currently serving as the Interim Vice President for the NMSU-A Student Government, where she is actively involved in representing and advocating for the interests of her peers and updating the NMSU-A Constitution to allow for more student participation. Additionally, she is honored to be working as a Labor Attaché Intern under the U.S Consulate General in Tijuana, where she contributes to important work in labor relations on a global scale. Lastly, she has been selected as a participant in the Ron Seidel Engineering Leadership Institute, a program that is helping her develop her leadership skills. She is passionate about both technology and leadership, and she is excited to continue her academic and extracurricular journey with NMSU.

Doña Ana Community College (DACC) Student Advisor: Daniela Garcia

Daniela Garcia is the Student Advisor for NSMU-Lead Institution. Ms. Garcia is a passionate advocate for education and an aspiring chemist from Chaparral, NM. She is a recent graduate from Dona Ana Community College and is currently a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry at NMSU. While a student at DACC she participated in the NM AMP SCCORE program for two consecutive



summers, learning from her mentors and gaining valuable insights in research to further her career aspirations. Her current goal is to pursue a graduate degree in chemistry to advocate for affordable healthcare solutions through research. She hopes to

bridge the gap between chemistry and healthcare, and develop cost-effective solutions for essential medications, aiming to make medicine more affordable and accessible. Danielle loves to cook and spend time with her friends. She has enjoyed serving as the NM AMP Student Advisor for NMSU!

Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) Student Advisor: Jeremy A. Sanchez

Jeremy A. Sanchez is the Student Advisor for Santa Fe Community College for 2023-24. He is a pre-engineering student at SFCC. He loves all things STEM and has participated in the AMP program in



the past. He had the honor to win the presentation award for the work his team did during his internship. He is currently attending school as well as working.

THANK YOU

We want to thank the following programs, students, faculty, and staff for all they did to ensure the success of the 2023 New Mexico AMP Student Research Conference

New Mexico's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR): New Mexico AMP Conference Collaborator

Dr. Alan Shoho

Provost and Chief Academic Advisor, NMSU, and PI of NM AMP in 2023-24

- Provided Welcome and Introduction to Conference
- Facilitated the Advisory Board Meeting in October 2023

Dr. Paola Bandini

Wells-Hatch Professor of Civil Engineering, NMSU

• New Co-PI

Dr. Stephanie Arnette

- New Co-PI
- Lead for the Social Science Research Team for NM AMP SPRA from 2024-2029

Conference Keynote Speakers

- Dr. Ben Flores, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at UTEP
- The Honorable New Mexico State Representative Joseph Sanchez (D), District 40

Workshop 1:

• Mr. Gustavo Piña, DACC Professor of Computer and Information Technologies; Presenter of "The Ethical Risks of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)"

Workshop 2:

 Mr. Marko Mohlenhoff, Director of TRIO McNair Scholars Programs;
 Presenter of "Graduate Degrees, The What, Why, and How to Get There"

Workshop 3:

 Dr. Scott Folkman, NMSU Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Chemistry and Biochemistry;
 Presenter of "Electrochemistry for Sustainability: green hydrogen, electro-organic synthesis, and electron sponges"

Faculty-Only Workshop:

 Dr. Juchao Yan, ENMU Professor of Chemistry and Graduate Coordinator
 Presenter of "Dairy wastewater treatment by algal technology at Eastern New Mexico University"

Facilitators for NM Mesa & TRIO Upward Bound Workshop

- Anita Gonzales, Deputy Director of New Mexico MESA
- Luz Gurrola, Director of TRIO Upward Bound GIDS/LCPS
- Ling Faith-Heuertz, Executive Director of New Mexico MESA

Michael Voegerl

- Manager for Community Education and Workforce Development at UNM-Valencia County Campus
- Facilitator of the Community College Conference Professional Development Workshops

Justin Karrenberg

- New Mexico AMP Program Specialist, Sr.
- Assisted with the Facilitation of the Professional Development Workshops

Student Presenters, Faculty Mentors, and Judges from our partner community college and university institutions.

All the staff and Institutional Coordinators of New Mexico AMP for recruiting students, staff, and faculty for the conference.

NM AMP Advisory Board for your wisdom, direction, and guidance for many years!

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