# GeoFORCE Annual Report 2020

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DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

GeoFORCE Texas Family,

My name is Leah Turner and I am honored to introduce myself as the program director for GeoFORCE Texas. My passion for serving diverse youth stems from my own lived experiences as an underrepresented student and higher education professional. I am eager to serve current, former, and future participants of the GeoFORCE Texas program and support their achievement of academic and career goals.

On behalf of the Jackson School of Geosciences, I would like to begin by thanking the entire GeoFORCE Texas family for your commitment and contributions to the program. This year was certainly full of new challenges: The staggering personal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, record-shattering extreme weather and fire, and a generational awakening about systemic racism and racial injustice in America. These challenges underscore our responsibility to open opportunity for underrepresented groups. Educating, engaging, and empowering the next generation of diverse leadership will change the trajectory of this great nation to be inclusive, equitable, and peaceful for all people.

Despite the challenges, the GeoFORCE Texas program prevailed. In mid-March, UT travel restrictions were set and school districts moved to virtual learning. GeoFORCE Texas found the pandemic silver lining: We will expand our reach and provide the same high-level academic program on a virtual platform. We collaborated with Jackson School experts in geoscience education research to create virtual academies, promoting a love of the Earth through an online platform. While things looked very different this summer, we were able to run a virtual program and successfully inspire and enrich the minds of future geoscientists. Moving forward, the GeoFORCE Texas program will not “waitlist” students. We will offer all qualified students who apply to the program an opportunity to learn remotely, with additional virtual field academies beginning in 2021 with 9th grade. Upon the successful completion of three virtual field academies, committed students of the virtual program will receive an invitation to join their traveling GeoFORCE 12th grade cohort in Austin, Texas.

In the fall of 2019, GeoFORCE Texas took on a large fundraising endeavor through UT’s HornRaiser program. I am thrilled to report that with the commitment from participants, parents, alumni, advisory committee members, and friends of the program, we raised over $13,000, increasing our individual donor gifts by 38%. We will continue this great effort by keeping the link to donate active on our website. We would also like to recognize and thank our current industry and foundation sponsors. Despite the economic downturn and increased pressure to minimize budgets, these companies and foundations proved their dedication for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in their industry. This investment matters more than ever! So, “thank you” to Shell, BHP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Marathon, Repsol, Halliburton, Hess, the Ed Rachal Foundation, and the SEG Foundation.

We are also very excited to announce that the GeoFORCE Texas program received a million-dollar gift from an anonymous donor. The first $250,000 goes towards an endowed scholarship for GeoFORCE students to attend The University of Texas at Austin. Combined with a one-to-one match from the university, this endowment worth $500,000 is now available to support alumni of GeoFORCE who choose to pursue an undergraduate degree at UT. In addition, this donor challenged us to increase programmatic sponsorship from companies outside of the oil and gas industry by matching money we raise over the next five years up to $750,000. This generous gift will make an enormous impact on the lives of the GeoFORCE Texas students for years to come!

The GeoFORCE Texas program remains strong and continues to make steady achievements amidst a global pandemic that is devastating fellow nonprofit programs, and you all are a part of this success. While we hope to travel on amazing field experiences together in person next summer, rest assured that we are creating new and innovative learning opportunities for our students, regardless of the circumstances. Be sure to stay in contact with us and check out the new GeoFORCE Monthly newsletter for updates. Thank you for your support in preparing the next generation STEM workforce through field experiences that broaden their understanding of the Earth, its resources, systems, and environment.

Sincerely,

Leah M. Turner, Ph.D.
GeoFORCE Texas is an outreach program of The University of Texas at Austin’s Jackson School of Geosciences that introduces high school students from underserved school districts to careers in geosciences and STEM by taking them on summer field experiences across the country. In 2020, all educational and mentoring experiences were conducted virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program also helps students apply for college and explore potential career paths through guidance and mentoring.

GeoFORCE Texas is recognized as one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country. Over 15 years, the program has seen 100% of its alumni finish high school and 90% persist through their second year of college. Of the GeoFORCE Texas alumni who are incoming freshmen in college this year, nearly half are majoring in STEM and about 14% are majoring in geosciences — some 35 times the national rate of undergraduate students who graduate with degrees in the geosciences.

These are the kind of results that in 2015 earned GeoFORCE Texas the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring — the highest such honor from the United States government.

GeoFORCE Texas began in 2005. It started in counties surrounding Southwest Texas Junior College. In 2008, the program expanded to schools in the Houston Independent School District. Since then, GeoFORCE Texas has recruited at least one student cohort from each region annually.

Each cohort takes part in the GeoFORCE program for four years. Students start the program the summer before 9th grade, and complete it the summer before 12th grade. During this time, they take trips to some of the most spectacular geologic sites in Texas and throughout the United States, and learn first-hand from geoscientists in the field, the lab and the classroom.

GEAR UP, a federal grant program administered by the Texas Education Agency, has helped expand GeoFORCE’s reach, funding a cohort with students from San Antonio, San Marcos, Lockhart, Navasota and Livingston. The Jackson School’s STEMFORCE program has also helped boost geosciences and STEM outreach in Texas, but it did not run a cohort this year because of COVID-19.

After finishing the final summer academy, all GeoFORCE and STEMFORCE students are admitted into the college transition experience and offered resources and guidance through their undergraduate years and beyond.

For more information, visit: www.jsg.utexas.edu/geoforce.

A GEOFORCE 12TH GRADE COHORT AT ENCHANTED ROCK IN CENTRAL TEXAS. PHOTO: GEOFORCE.
STATISTICS
GeoFORCE students come from 21 counties in Southwest, Central and East Texas.

**GeoFORCE Counties**

1. Bee County
2. Bexar County
3. Caldwell County
4. DeWitt County
5. Dimmit County
6. Edwards County
7. Frio County
8. Grimes County
9. Hays County
10. Harris County
11. Karnes County
12. Kinney County
13. LaSalle County
14. Live Oak County
15. Maverick County
16. Medina County
17. Polk County
18. Real County
19. Uvalde County
20. Val Verde County
21. Zavala County
In summer 2020, 323 Texas high school students attended GeoFORCE Texas. Eighty completed the program, which was held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic. The students are divided into three groups. Most of the students are from underserved school districts in Houston and rural Southwest Texas. The GEAR UP group is relatively small, constituting about 8% of GeoFORCE students, and is supported by a federal grant distributed by the Texas Education Agency. Students in this group come from counties throughout the state.

*Numbers may not equal 100% because of rounding.*

**Houston Cohort Ethnicity**

- 46% Hispanic
- 11% White
- 11% Asian
- 29% African-American/Black
- <1% No Answer
- <1% African-American/Black

**Southwest Cohort Ethnicity**

- 78% Hispanic
- 17% White
- 5% Asian
- <1% No Answer
- <1% African-American/Black

**Overall GeoFORCE Ethnicity**

- 62% Hispanic
- 16% White
- 13% African-American/Black
- 2% No Answer
- 7% Asian

**GEAR UP Cohort Ethnicity**

- 50% Hispanic
- 39% White
- 8% African-American/Black
- 4% Asian

**Summer 2020 Attendance: 323**

- GEAR UP 26
- Houston 140
- Southwest 157

**GeoFORCE Gender**

- Male 38%
- Female 62%
A total of 428 GeoFORCE alumni are undergraduate students. Nearly half of first-time freshmen that enrolled in 2020 are majoring in a STEM field, with about 14% of these students majoring in geosciences. Out of all undergraduates currently enrolled at a four-year university, 7% are geoscience majors. These percentages are far greater than the 0.4% of undergraduate students nationally who graduate with geosciences degrees, according to data collected in 2016 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Numbers may not equal 100% because of rounding. STEM data does not include health sciences.

### Institutions Attended by Undergraduate Geoscience Majors

- The University of Texas at Austin
- Texas A&M University
- University of Houston
- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of New Hampshire
- Occidental College
- University of Texas Permian Basin
- Oklahoma State University
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Sam Houston State University
- Dickinson College
- Angelo State University
- Franklin and Marshall College
- Texas A&M University-Kingsville

### Students Enrolled in College: 428

| Enrolled at 2-Year Colleges (Including Certificates) | 60 |
| Undergraduates Enrolled at 4-Year Universities | 368 |

### First-Time Freshmen Majoring in STEM: 47%

| Freshmen Majoring in Geoscience | 14% |
| Freshmen Majoring in Engineering | 12% |
| Freshmen Majoring in Biological Sciences | 9% |
| Freshmen Majoring in other STEM | 12% |

### STEM Undergraduates Enrolled at 4-Year Universities: 46%

| Geoscience Majors | 25 | 7% |
| Engineering Majors | 43 | 12% |
| Other STEM Majors | 101 | 27% |
Out of the 77 GeoFORCE alumni who are currently enrolled in graduate school, 34% are studying a STEM field. About 17% of these students are studying geosciences, which is second only to health professions. This percentage is far greater than national trends, in which 0.3% of master's students and 1.3% of doctoral students earned a degree in geosciences, according to data collected in 2016 by the National Center for Education Statistics. Numbers may not equal 100% because of rounding.

### Number of Students: 77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoscience</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other STEM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-STEM</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pursuing Geoscience Graduate Degrees: 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 2005, a total of 1,490 students have completed the GeoFORCE program. About 30% of these students are currently enrolled in an undergraduate program. Students who have graduated college have earned a total of 153 associate's degrees and 602 bachelor's degrees. About 12% of the bachelor's degrees are in geosciences. That is 30 times higher than the 0.4% of bachelor's degrees earned in geosciences by U.S. citizens and permanent residents in 2016, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Numbers may not equal 100% because of rounding. STEM data does not include health sciences.

GeoFORCE students earn bachelor's degrees in geosciences at a rate 30 times higher than the national average.

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DEVELOPMENT
GeoFORCE is supported by a number of donors. They include the organizations listed below, as well as individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Sponsors</th>
<th>Foundation Sponsors</th>
<th>Charitable Funds</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$150K and up</td>
<td>Shell Oil Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100K and up</td>
<td>BHP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K and up</td>
<td>Chevron Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25K and up</td>
<td>Conoco Phillips Company Marathon Oil Corporation Repsol Exploracion S.A.</td>
<td>Halliburton Foundation Rachal Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25K</td>
<td>Hess Corporation</td>
<td>SEG Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UT HornRaiser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We would like to recognize the following individuals who contributed to GeoFORCE Texas during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Cindy Johanna Arzola
Sara S. Avant-Stanley
Tania Babu
Maria Balza
Galilea I. Barrera
Melody Bechberger
Cicely Benoit
Chaquette Lynn Blanks
Robert L. Boyce
John Branch
Kris Brisco
Jacqueline P. Buller
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Reynaldo Cabrera Jr.
Daniel Steven Campos
Dolores Campos
Stephanie Canas
J. Allen Carnes
Danielle L. Carpenter
David L. Carr
Charles A. Caughey
Surendra Chaurasiya
Sami Chen
Lindsay Crawford
Marjan Dargahi
Connie Dong
Jacqueline Leigh Drazan
Brandy Eddinger
Ann Ferguson
Darlene Fitzgerald
Peter P Flaig
Teresa A. Gaitan
Katherine Garcia
Belle German
Anne Geyer
Claudia Gilmer
Kathleen Grover
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Ben P. Hooper
Saundra Hudspeth
Diana Ibarra
Marie Isabel
Sarah Jeansonne
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Tianni Kelly
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Lee Loden
John A. Maisano
Sandra Mancera
Lauren E. Martin
Rowan Martin
dale
John O. McClain
Marcia McKinney
Linda H. McMillan
Kathryn Menke
Wesley Mossholder
Alison Suzanne Mote
Jose Munoz
Zoe Neuner
Fiona Nguyen
Omo Odigie
Mary Frances Odukwe
Abayomi I. Olufowoshe
Leslee Palacios
Fabian H. Pena
Lillian Petty
Stephen C. Phillips
Heidi Prince
Margarita Ramos
Matthew John Ramos
Kaushalie P. Ranaweera
Brandy L. Redden
Enrique Reyes Jr.
Susan G. Rosenbaum
Kimberly Lycurgus Routt
Georgia B. Sanders
Leslie Shoemaker
Christine M. Skirius
Reginal W. Spiller
Eric Stautberg
Stephanie L. Sullivan
Jessica Cori Errico Swafford
Dana Thomas
Douglas N. Toepperwein
Meredith Townsend
Dennis R. Trombatore
Kristen N. Tucek
Leah Turner
Ryan Turner
Marissa Anne Vara
Van Quang Thanh Vo
Keqing Wang
Richard J. Weiland, Jr.
Laurel Wilkinson
Sheryl Wilson
Molly Witter
Chung Won
Shaun Ybarra
Samantha C. Ying

Note: The anonymous gift mentioned in the director's message will be included in next year's annual report.

We are grateful for the enduring support of the endowments that have been established to support the program in perpetuity.

Jesse and Ina Brundrett GeoFORCE Texas Fund, Established in 2016 by the estates of Jesse and Ina Brundrett

Charles A. Caughey Endowed Graduate Fellowship, Established in 2019 by Mr. Charles A. Caughey

Darwin Family GeoFORCE Texas Fund, Established in 2009 by Mr. C. Barnes and Mrs. Pamela T. Darwin

GeoFORCE Texas Fund, Established in 2009 by an anonymous donor

Gerson Garcia Endowed GeoFORCE Scholarship Fund, Established in 2014 by friends in memory of Gerson Garcia

Friends of GeoFORCE Endowment in Honor of Doug Ratcliff, Established in 2014 by friends of Doug Ratcliff in his honor

Deborah Susan Pfeiffer Endowed GeoFORCE Scholarship, Established in 2017 by Mrs. Deborah S. Pfeiffer

Janet E. and David I. Rainey GeoFORCE Texas Scholarship, Established in 2010 by Drs. Janet E. and David I. Rainey

Students Raising Students GeoFORCE Endowment, Established in 2017 by the Graduate Student Executive Committee

Stephen P. and Katherine Hubby Weiner GeoFORCE Scholarship, Established in 2017 by Mr. Stephen P. and Mrs. Katherine H. Weiner
ALUMNI VOICES
Ten GeoFORCE alumni are currently first-year geology majors. Three of them are enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin.

Memphis Edwards
Houston, Texas
Energy Institute High School
Oklahoma State University

Aracely Saldivar
Hondo, Texas
Hondo High School
The University of Texas at San Antonio

Jackson Battle
Austin, Texas
Akins Early College High School
Texas A&M University

Eleanor Jeansonne
Austin, Texas
Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders
Occidental College

James Sun
Houston, Texas
Bellaire High School
The University of Texas at Austin

Abigayle Carnes
Uvalde, Texas
Uvalde High School
The University of Texas at Austin

Isabel Johnson
Austin, Texas
Akins Early College High School
The University of Iowa

Juan Vazquez
Eagle Pass, Texas
C.C. Winn High School
Valedictorian
The University of Texas at Austin

Benjamin Chapa
Carrizo Springs, Texas
Carrizo Springs High School
Salutatorian
Texas A&M University at Kingsville

Leslie Rosario
Austin, Texas
Akins Early College High School
The University of Texas at San Antonio
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Laura Gloria

As a water quality specialist for Canyon Lake Water Service Company in New Braunfels, Texas, Laura Gloria’s job involves many of the same data-driven skills she learned during her four summers as a GeoFORCE student. “GeoFORCE really solidified how much I love the outdoors,” Gloria said. “I highly recommend, as a student, that you take all the opportunities you can. Everything serves as a learning opportunity for you to figure out what you do and do not like.”

In 2017, Gloria graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor’s degree in environmental geosciences. During her undergraduate studies, she learned about geographic information system mapping, site remediation, urbanization, environmental law and ethics, and public health — but she discovered her favorite subject by taking advantage of research opportunities. She was thrilled to explore a variety of environments, studying clouds and snow in Colorado, dunes and the water table of South Padre Island, and hydrology in Costa Rica. Taking her passion for the study of water, Gloria went on to earn a master’s degree in water management and hydrological sciences in 2019.

Now, Gloria’s work at Canyon Lake Water Service Company continues focusing on water. Her main function is to ensure that the company stays in compliance with federal and state regulatory water standards by reviewing data, creating monitoring programs, and implementing operating policies. She oversees three surface water plants, three wastewater plants, and approximately 40 wells. Her favorite task thus far involved a water quality study that included evaluating disinfection by-products and creating a treatment recommendation.

“I really want students to know how broad the geosciences are,” Gloria said. “There are so many diverse jobs and work environments you can be a part of! You can be a water quality specialist, a field scientist, or a lab technician. You can restore ecosystems, make maps, or be an advocate for environmental justice. You can work for private or public, profit or non-profit, in an office, lab, or in the field. That’s why I love the geosciences so much — because it truly is interdisciplinary.”

“I really want students to know how broad the geosciences are.”

-Laura Gloria

ABOVE, LEFT: LAURA GLORIA WITH THE FIRST SAMPLE FROM HER LEAD AND COPPER SAMPLING PROGRAM. PHOTO: LAURA GLORIA.

ABOVE, RIGHT: LAURA GLORIA SERVING AS A GEOFORCE COUNSELOR DURING A TRIP TO LOVERS KEY STATE PARK IN FLORIDA. PHOTO: GEOFORCE.

LEFT: LAURA GLORIA AT CRATER LAKE IN OREGON DURING A GEOFORCE 11TH GRADE TRIP. PHOTO: GEOFORCE.
In the summer of 2011, Shukuru Makanyaga was on his third GeoFORCE academy trip — this one to the beautiful Pacific Northwest where he learned about plate tectonics and geologic hazards under GeoFORCE instructor Jeffrey Paine, a senior research scientist at The University of Texas at Austin’s Bureau of Economic Geology. Eight years later, Makanyaga sat across the table from Paine in an interview at the bureau.

Makanyaga was a GeoFORCE student from 2009 to 2012. It was through his trips that he discovered a love for geology, especially as it pertains to the oil and gas industry. Throughout his years at Texas A&M University, he continued pursuing information about the oil and gas field as an active member of the Society of Petroleum Geologists, the Society of Petroleum Engineers, and the American Association of Drilling Engineers.

Upon graduating with a bachelor's degree in geology in December 2017, Makanyaga worked as a wellsite geologist for Impac Exploration Services, where he spent two years at drilling sites all over West Texas and southeast New Mexico. In late 2019, he sought out a more stable job and was thrilled to get an interview at the bureau.

“GeoFORCE is primarily responsible for why I’m doing what I’m doing today,” Makanyaga said. “It introduced me to the field as a 14-year-old. It helped me decide what I wanted to study. I will always remember what GeoFORCE did for me.”

Makanyaga is now a research engineer & geologist for the bureau. He is currently working on a project funded by the Texas Railroad Commission to analyze well logs. This data will be inputted into software used by oil companies to make informed decisions on what counties to begin surface-casing in for future drilling projects. In the future, he’d love to work with a variety of bureau staff and even do some outreach. He hopes to one day get a master’s degree in geology under the tutelage of one of his colleagues at the bureau.

“I’m excited for the different avenues I can take,” Makanyaga said.

“Above: Shukuru Makanyaga scanning a geophysical log at his office in the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. Photo: Jeffrey Paine.

Left: Shukuru Makanyaga at Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona, during a GeoFORCE 10th Grade Academy Trip. Photo: GeoFORCE.
David Splawn is a geoscience technician at ExxonMobil, a job he never considered before entering the GeoFORCE program. He was a GeoFORCE student from 2010 to 2014, before joining Texas A&M University as a geology major.

“GeoFORCE is single-handedly the reason why I chose to pursue a career in the geosciences.”

-David Splawn

David Splawn

“GeoFORCE is single-handedly the reason why I chose to pursue a career in the geosciences.”

-David Splawn

graduate scholarship. He graduated with his bachelor’s degree in geology in 2018. From there, he joined ExxonMobil in the New Opportunities Sub-Saharan African business unit. As a geoscience technician, Splawn supports projects focusing on basin genetics and its control on the formation of hydrocarbon systems. The ultimate goal of his work is to identify acreage in areas where the geology is the most favorable for an economic hydrocarbon discovery. Recently, he’s been working on creating an accurate model of crustal domains around the Atlantic margin and updating the continental sediment fill map.

“There is very limited well control in the areas where I work,” Splawn said. “The majority of the data I analyze is uncalibrated seismic data. These areas have extremely complicated geology and one of my tasks is help refine seismic data as much as possible to minimize the uncertainty for interpreters.”

Splawn enjoys working on some of the industry's most complex problems, a task made easier with his company’s state-of-the-art technology and knowledgeable experts. ExxonMobil has also encouraged him to continue pursuing his education. He’s currently working on his master's in geophysics at the University of Houston, where he’s researching phase changes of seismic data in petroleum reservoirs.

ABOVE: DAVID SPLAWN IN FRONT OF THE EXXONMOBIL SPRING CAMPUS. PHOTO: DAVID SPLAWN.

LEFT: DAVID SPLAWN AT CRATER LAKE IN OREGON DURING A GEOFORCE 11TH GRADE ACADEMY TRIP. PHOTO: GEOFORCE.
In 2009, when Stephanie Suarez first joined the GeoFORCE program, she had no idea that in 10 years she’d be one of the few geologists in the world studying Martian rocks.

Suarez finished the GeoFORCE summer program in 2012 and received a full-ride GeoFORCE Texas graduate scholarship to The University of Texas at Austin. There, she started her research career by determining ages of volcanic ashes surrounding early land biotas to evaluate the rate and character of land colonization under the supervision of Jackson School of Geosciences Associate Professor Elizabeth Catlos.

Suarez graduated with a bachelor’s degree in general geosciences in 2017 and proceeded directly to graduate school at the University of Houston. In 2019, she received her master's in geology. She is currently working on her doctoral degree at the University of Houston and studies the chronology and petrology of extraterrestrial and terrestrial materials under Professor Tom Lapen. Her research is funded by both the highly competitive National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and by NASA grants. With Dr. Lapen’s research group, Suarez is investigating the nature and timing of Martian magmatism through isotopic analyses of Martian meteorites.

“GeoFORCE not only assisted me financially but was an incredible support network as a first-generation student.”

-Stephanie Suarez

“GeoFORCE not only assisted me financially but was an incredible support network as a first-generation student.”
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