



MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH
2020-2021



MISERICORDIA
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MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT

Misericordia University (MU) announces a national search for its next president and invites nominations, applications, and expressions of interest.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Misericordia seeks an innovative new president who is an experienced and successful leader in higher education and who is deeply grounded in liberal arts education and the charisms of the Sisters of Mercy. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to lead an institution that is strongly mission-driven and has enjoyed a recent history of growth. Even though it has seen a recent decline in enrollment exacerbated by the pandemic, it is in solid financial shape with budget surpluses, responsible financial-aid management, and strong fundraising. What is more, in the past few years, it has witnessed an expansion and improvement of campus facilities, epitomized by the nearly-completed \$45 million, state-of-the-art Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center. At the same time, Misericordia is at a natural inflection point. Its current strategic plan concludes in 2021.

Its growth over the last few years has included the development of strong health-science programs, most recently adding a satellite nursing program in Pittsburgh. Though no one knows precisely what higher education will look like post-COVID-19, it will be important for Misericordia to respond creatively to the changing landscape. Thus, the new president will have the opportunity to lead the University not just in the usual strategic planning effort, but in one that encompasses enrollment management and truly defines the nature and direction of the University for the coming decade. To succeed, the new president must be deeply grounded in the values and mission of Misericordia, have excellent planning skills, be able to engage all constituencies of the University, and be adept at identifying emerging opportunities and options. In this work, the new president will have as partners a faculty strongly committed to the University and its mission, who are both creative and effective teachers and productive scholars and researchers. Equally critical partners in this work are a very capable staff deeply committed to the mission of the University and a Board of Trustees who have a long history of love for Misericordia, effective leadership, and strong support and an openness to new leadership and new directions.

HISTORY AND MISSION

Misericordia was founded as a college for women by the Religious Sisters of Mercy in the tradition of their founder, Catherine McAuley. Founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1831 with a mission to shelter and educate women and girls, the Sisters brought this mission to the United States and founded hospitals and educational institutions in service of those in need. In 1875, they came to the Wyoming Valley of Northeastern Pennsylvania and established a school for children and night classes for adults. Based on this experience, they saw the need for collegiate education for women. Having purchased land, their hopes finally were realized in 1924. College Misericordia, as it was then named, was Luzerne County's first four-year institution of higher learning. With a campus of 100 acres in Dallas, Pennsylvania, Misericordia (whose name means "heart of mercy") enrolled 37 students its first fall, focusing their studies on the Sisters' motto: Mulier Fortis, valiant women trained in scholarship and spirituality. Since its inception, the University's mission and culture have been defined by the Mercy Charisms of mercy, service, justice, and hospitality. In the 1970s, Misericordia became co-educational. And in 2007, it became a university and additional graduate programs, both at the master's and doctoral levels. This past year it created a satellite campus in Pittsburgh for its nursing program in partnership with Orbis Education. MU is a part of the 17-member Conference for Mercy Higher Education. Throughout its history and the changes it has undergone, Misericordia has remained faithful to its mission "to foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and respect for persons in an environment where all are welcome."





MISERICORDIA TODAY

Misericordia is a small comprehensive institution with a strong commitment to liberal arts education and the Charisms of the Sisters of Mercy, offering baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees, and undergraduate and post-graduate certifications. It offers 37 undergraduate majors and graduate programs in business, education, and the health sciences both on campus and online. It is located on a 123-acre campus in Dallas, Pennsylvania, with a satellite location in Pittsburgh. It enrolls 1584 full-time and 380 part-time undergraduates and 248 full-time and 332 part-time graduate students. Eighty-four percent of first-year students live on campus as do 37 percent of upper-class students. Forty-five percent of its first-year, full-time students and 35 percent of all full-time undergraduates are student/athletes. It enrolls four international students.

Misericordia's students are taught by 144 full-time faculty who teach four courses per semester, creating (currently) a 10:1 student-faculty ratio and an average undergraduate class size of 19. This low student/faculty ratio also sustains the faculty's commitment to a student-centered, individualized, and high-impact educational experience and their own considerable work and growth as scholars and researchers. Eighty-six percent of the faculty are white; the largest minority group being Asian. Ninety-three percent of the staff are white. The University consists of three colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, and Health Sciences and Education. Misericordia is accredited by the Middle States Association and is scheduled for its next reaffirmation in 2023.

In the past few years, the University has witnessed a marked expansion and improvement of its campus facilities epitomized by the nearly-completed, \$45 million, state-of-the-art Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center, and including the renovation of several existing structures. Misericordia has a history of budget surpluses and has recently completed the largest capital campaign in the University's history. The University is blessed with a committed 30-member board of trustees with a long history of responsible and prudent management and generous financial support.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The foundation of a Misericordia education is a rigorous and comprehensive core curriculum intended to enable students "to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively, and to embody the spirit of service." The curriculum consists of distribution requirements in all of the major disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences: two courses each in the behavioral sciences, English literature, fine arts, history and government, mathematics, philosophy, religious studies, and the natural sciences. To fulfill these requirements, students may choose from among a number of courses designed for inclusion in the core. One of these courses will include basic writing instruction and two others are writing-intensive. The current core curriculum is 49 credits in size; students also take three free elective classes from anywhere in the curriculum. The faculty is currently reviewing the core requirements and exploring revisions.

The College of Arts and Sciences offers undergraduate majors in Biology; Biochemistry; Chemistry; Clinical Laboratory Science; Computer Science; English; Government, Law, and National Security; History; Mathematics; Medical and Health Humanities; Philosophy; Psychology; and Statistics. It also offers instruction in Fine Arts, Physics, and Religious Studies. In addition, the College offers several minors, some in major fields, some in interdisciplinary areas, and some in areas where instruction, but no major, is offered. Its most heavily enrolled majors are: Biology; Government, Law, and National Security; and Psychology. The College bears the major responsibility for teaching the core curriculum courses; it is also home of the MU Honors Program. In 2019, the College graduated 79 majors; it is home to 53 full-time faculty. It is currently developing an Environmental Studies major with grant support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The College of Business offers undergraduate majors in Accounting, Business Administration, Healthcare Management, Information Technology, Mass Communications, Professional Studies, and Sport Management. It also offers an MBA and a master's in Organizational Management (recently folded into the MBA). The most heavily enrolled majors are: Accounting, Business Administration, and Healthcare Management. The College graduated 153 undergraduate majors and 48 graduate students. It is home to 17 full-time faculty.

The College of Health Sciences and Education offers undergraduate majors in Applied Behavior Science, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Early Childhood/Special Education, Mid-Level Education, Health Science, Medical Science, Occupational Therapy, Patient Navigation, Speech-Language Pathology, Medical Imaging, Nursing, and Social Work. The most heavily enrolled majors are Medical Imaging, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, and Speech Language Pathology. The College also offers master's degrees in Education, Health Care Informatics, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Physician's Assistant, and Speech Language Pathology. It also offers doctoral degrees in Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. In 2019, the College graduated 243 undergraduates and 114 graduate students. It is home to 74 full-time faculty. The College and its faculty truly embody the mercy charism of service, and the healthcare disciplines have a strong grounding in the University's mission.

In addition to undergraduate majors and minors, Misericordia offers a four-year Honors Program for qualified students. The program consists of a 36-credit alternate, enriched core sequence in the humanities and social sciences. The honors sections are learning communities that are interdisciplinary and use discussion and writing as the primary pedagogies. The Program also requires a 300-level Honors Seminar and an Honors Capstone course devoted to an individualized project the student chooses to pursue. The program typically matriculates 60 students and graduates 10.

As befits a Mercy institution, Misericordia has a strong service-learning program. Options include courses that have a service-learning component or courses entirely focused on service learning. In all cases, courses must be academically rigorous. They must also be conducted in conjunction with one of MU's many community partners. The work must not only have academic value but also meet a need of the partner. Through this experience, students not only develop academically, but also learn more deeply one of the Mercy Charisms.

Misericordia offers its students opportunities to study off-campus, which includes both study abroad and study away options. The programs are administered through the Study Abroad/Away Office. Though programs are suspended this year because of the coronavirus, normally 20-30 students per year study abroad or away.

Misericordia offers a multitude of opportunities for students to pursue individual research projects under the guidance of a faculty member. Many of these opportunities are available through the various academic departments. In addition, the University recently developed a summer undergraduate research fellowship (SURF) program. The program provides a \$4000 stipend and free housing to students to make possible a summer devoted to research work under the supervision of a faculty member. Student and faculty participation in the program has been growing, with 15 students doing research last summer. As a result of the growing number of research opportunities at MU, students are increasingly presenting their research both on campus and at off-campus research conferences. Their travel expenses are supported by the University.



In addition to its support for student research, Misericordia is increasingly offering support and encouragement for faculty research. Coordinated through the Office of Sponsored Programs, the University assists faculty in seeking extramural research funding and grant writing. The University also has its own programs to support faculty scholarship. Faculty may receive a one course per semester reduction in their teaching load to engage in research during the academic year. Summer research grants are also available that provide a \$2600 stipend and the costs of research supplies and travel.

CAMPUS LIFE

Misericordia University is a unique place. A faith-based institution that focuses outwardly, it has a deep and genuine shared commitment to its mission and the Mercy Charisms – Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality, that pervades the University community and has a transformative effect on students. Visitors to the campus quickly recognize the spirit of service present in the student body and which is evident in even casual interactions. Because of this shared sense of mission, the University places its students as the top priority. As a result, student engagement at Misericordia is unmatched. Both inside and outside of the classroom, whether through sponsored academic research opportunities or participating in any of the more than forty clubs and organizations or 25 athletic teams on campus, the experiences that students have are transformational.



Many of the programs offered to students bear the clear mark of the Mercy Charisms. The University offers a robust support network for students with disabilities and people who are in need. The Guaranteed Placement Program is a supplemental career development program that offers career-focused workshops and service leadership programs to prepare students for entering the workforce or continuing their education in graduate school. The Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program (WWC), one of only eight programs of its type in the United States, empowers economically disadvantaged single mothers by providing the opportunity to complete a college degree and create brighter futures for themselves and for their children. The program has been very successful and has grown to support 16 women and their children.

The University offers a robust campus ministry program. Through Campus Ministry, the University offers opportunities for spiritual formation, social justice advocacy, and service, both in the United States and abroad. A Celebration of the Eucharist is held twice a week in the University Chapel; additional masses and liturgical services are available through Campus Ministry and throughout the week in the Mercy Center Chapel.

Misericordia University competes in the NCAA Division III, Middle Atlantic Conference / MAC Freedom. Women's sports include basketball, soccer, field hockey, volleyball, swimming, softball, cross-country, cheerleading, lacrosse, golf, tennis, and track and field. Men's sports include football, basketball, soccer, swimming, cross-country, baseball, golf, lacrosse, volleyball, tennis, and track and field. The University recently added both men's and women's eSports competition.

CAMPUS FACILITIES

Located in a scenic section of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Misericordia's 123-acre main campus and expanding lower campus, just a short walk away, feature two dozen well-maintained buildings and athletic facilities.

The infrastructure of the University is in good shape and up to date. The newest building, the \$45-million Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center, will be completed in 2021 following the largest capital campaign in Misericordia's history. The Science Center is now the largest academic building on campus. Including the renovation of the existing Science Hall wing, it provides 85,900 square feet of state-of-the-art laboratories, technology, and learning spaces.

The Trocaire Hall renovation, which provides facilities for the Physician Assistant program and the Center for Adult and Continuing Education, was completed last year. The McHale Residence Hall renovation as well as the renovation and University-focused repurpose of a recently purchased 50,000 square foot building that used to house a nearby printing facility are still in progress.

ENROLLMENT

Over the past six years, Misericordia has experienced a gradual decline in undergraduate enrollment. The undergraduate FTE went from 2004 in 2014 to 1711 in 2019. The headcount enrollment fell during that same period from 2465 to 1964, reflecting a steeper decline among part-time students than among full-time students. Full-time graduate enrollments over this period, however, rose from 185 to 248; part-time enrollments fell from 546 to 332. Thus, while the headcount graduate enrollment declined by about 150 students, the FTE graduate enrollment was virtually flat. Overall, the FTE enrollment at MU has declined by about 300 students. This reflects a significant decline in part-time students from 1238 to 712. Full-time enrollment declined by just a little over 100 students.

From 2014 to 2019, the number of applications declined from 2050 to 1547 and the number of those offered admission dropped from 1465 to 1327. However, the number of matriculants declined only slightly from 438 to 410. While the number of matriculants declined slightly, their academic profile increased. The mean SAT score rose from 1072 in 2014 to 1137 (new SAT), significantly above both the national and the Pennsylvania mean. What is more, student persistence increased over this same period. First-year to second-year retention was 82 percent; overall retention was 89 percent. The four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates (2013 cohort) are 61 percent, 67 percent, and 68 percent respectively—all well above the national average. Ninety-nine percent of MU students receive financial aid. The average institutional aid award has increased from \$12,190 in 2014 to \$18,768 in 2019—in all cases smaller than the national average for similar-sized institutions.

The gender composition of the full-time undergraduates is 35 percent male and 65 percent female. For all students, it is 31 percent male and 69 percent female. Sixty-five percent of the students are from Pennsylvania. Misericordia also draws significantly from New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Delaware. The racial and ethnic composition of the student body is roughly constant in all the different classifications of students: 84.6 percent are white, non-Latino; 3.2 percent are Hispanic/Latino; 2.6 percent are Black/African American; and 1.5 percent are Asian.

Enrollment Management consists of nine full-time staff members; the Student Financial Services Office, which includes financial aid, consists of six full-time staff. Last year the admissions office adopted the Common Application; it was also the first year that predictive modeling was done for the University by Credo Higher Education Consulting. A task force was formed at Misericordia to develop a strategic enrollment management plan; however, the results have not developed much traction.

FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

The University is financially very solid. It has a strong balance sheet and it has achieved budget surpluses for the past several years. It has managed financial aid well and therefore has enjoyed a solid net-tuition revenue. Its endowment has grown to \$54 million and has been drawn upon very conservatively. It has substantial reserves.

Fundraising is also strong and Misericordia's constituents are responsive. The \$30 million *Now for Tomorrow* campaign, the largest campaign in Misericordia's history, hit its goal in March of 2019. Currently at \$37 million, the campaign has raised over \$17 million for the Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center, \$14 million for endowment, and \$5 million for the Annual Fund.

Fundraising continues; its goals are to increase the endowment and support of smaller capital projects.

The University has 19,000 living alumni and an active alumni-relations program. The program is supported by three full-time alumni-relations staff and an alumni board.

The advancement staff has recently been reduced from 19 to nine members. Strong and aggressive fundraising will require additional staff.



DALLAS

Settled in 1797, Dallas is located in the Back Mountain region of the Wyoming Valley in Northeast Pennsylvania. It was named after Alexander J. Dallas, the Sixth United States Secretary of the Treasury. The University's upper and lower campuses straddle the border between the Borough of Dallas and Dallas Township. It is 10 minutes from Harvey's Lake, the largest natural lake in Pennsylvania and a popular recreation spot for swimming, fishing, and boating.

The Back Mountain region is a mostly residential, suburban area of about 32,000 people residing in several municipalities and two school districts, the Dallas Area and Lake Lehman School Districts. The area is known for its beauty and outdoor activities in all four seasons, including hiking, skiing, minor league hockey, and baseball, as well as concert venues and fine dining. The major industries in the area are healthcare and small business. Misericordia is the largest employer in Dallas. Racially, the area is preponderantly white (96 percent); religiously, it is preponderantly Catholic (43 percent).

The campus is a 15-minute drive from the City of Wilkes-Barre and is about 30 minutes from the City of Scranton. The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area is much more ethnically diverse; it also offers many opportunities for private pre-collegiate education. It is home to several institution of higher education: Wilkes University, the University of Scranton, Kings College, Luzerne County Community College, and Marywood University. Misericordia is a two-hour drive from New York City and Philadelphia.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President of Misericordia is the chief executive officer of the University and reports directly to the 30-member Board of Trustees of which s/he is an *ex officio* member. The board does an annual evaluation of the president and a self-evaluation every three years. There are currently no term limits on board membership. The board is currently restructuring its relationship with the Sisters of Mercy.

Misericordia has seven vice presidents—Academic Affairs, Planning and External Relations, University Advancement, Student Life, Mission Integration, Finance and Administration, and Enrollment Management—all of whom report directly to the president. The president is assisted by a chief of staff and an executive assistant.



LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Misericordia's new president will be expected to focus on the following priorities:

To live the mission of Misericordia and to ensure that the charisms of the Sisters of Mercy shape the planning, decisions, and activities of the University. Misericordia has a strongly-lived mission that is embedded in the life of the University community. Discussions, plans, and decisions are all assessed in relation to the charisms. This is not only a reflection of who Misericordia is, but it is also something that sets it off from other institutions. It is also something that it successfully imparts to the students entrusted to it. The new president must be a person for whom the charisms are second nature. Moreover, given the financial pressures of higher education, the new president must be someone who will not compromise the charisms for financial gain.

To work with the entire Misericordia community to develop a strategic plan and a strategic enrollment plan based on it. Misericordia's current five-year strategic plan will come to conclusion in 2021. It is naturally time to begin the process anew. However, recent events have made this an even more momentous and truly strategic undertaking. By adding new programs, Misericordia has slowly evolved over the past several years to the point where it needs to become more intentional about its growth and development. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised the real possibility that higher education—like many other segments of our society—will be significantly different post-COVID, creating new opportunities and new perils. The new president will have to develop a basic vision for MU with the community and be able to translate it creatively into actionable change.

Misericordia is also in need of a well-conceived strategic enrollment management plan that gives direction to academic planning, enrollment management, and financial planning. This plan will need to be mindful of both mission and markets and achieve the happy marriage of both. This is best done in the context of an institution-wide strategic plan as well as a strategic marketing effort.

To increase enrollment Misericordia has witnessed a slow decline in enrollment over the past several years and a more precipitous decline this year due to COVID-19. The University would like to return to its more historical enrollment levels. There are many ways of doing this, including not only admissions, but also marketing, program development, increased retention, and academic planning. The new president will need to work with the Vice President for Enrollment Management and the other vice presidents, with the aid of enrollment management or marketing consultants, to better assess MU's current situation and institute new and promising enrollment strategies that are part of a larger strategic enrollment management and marketing plan.

To diversify the faculty, staff, and student body Misericordia's immediate environment is not highly diverse, and the University's student, faculty, and staff reflect that. However, there are areas that are within easy reach of MU that are highly diverse. Of equal concern is the growing gender imbalance in the student body. There is much about MU that should be attractive to diverse students, and therefore, its location does not present a significant obstacle to diversifying the student body; in fact, it offers an important opportunity. However, the University does not currently have the infrastructure to support the diverse students on campus let alone a significant increase. There is currently no multicultural coordinator and no study-away coordinator. Diversity efforts fall largely to the Vice President for Mission Integration. However, without adequate infrastructure, diverse students feel marginalized at MU and sometimes unwelcome in the community where the University is located. To proceed aggressively to recruit more diverse students without making adequate preparation for their integration and success is not only a disservice to them, but, in the long-term, a liability for the University. The new president will have to develop realistic plans to increase the diversity of the student body and faculty and staff that include the necessary investments in infrastructure.

Working with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the deans, and the faculty, to ensure that the liberal arts identity of Misericordia is properly reflected in the core curriculum and the balance of the arts and sciences disciplines among the other schools and disciplines. While Misericordia has expanded recently in a variety of more career-focused programs, its identity is tied to its strength in the liberal arts. This identity requires a robust and well-conceived general education program, strong majors in the arts, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences, and creating sufficient opportunities in career-focused majors—many of which are large by necessity—to take electives or minors or to double major in the liberal arts disciplines. The new president will need to ensure that the discussion of revising the core curriculum does not languish. S/he will also have to encourage the deans, department chairs, and faculty to revise their curricula or pedagogy in ways that better connect with increasingly career-minded students. The new president will also need to offer equal encouragement to the deans, department chairs, and faculty in the more career-oriented disciplines to find ways for their majors to make more room for liberal learning and at the same time be well-prepared for career opportunities beyond Misericordia.

To enhance the fundraising efforts of Misericordia. Having recently completed a major fundraising campaign and financed a long list of campus additions and improvements, Misericordia has an enviable record. This success was based largely on the efforts of the advancement staff. However, because of recent budget cuts, the staff has been reduced from 19 to nine. While this may be a prudent short-term strategy to balance the budget during a pandemic, it may diminish revenues in the long term. Donor cultivation is often a long-term process. Neglecting it now will diminish the effectiveness of MU in the future. Therefore, the new president must evaluate current staffing levels in advancement and adjust them so that investment and return are better balanced. The new president will also need to assume the traditional presidential role of fundraiser-in-chief.

To preserve and enhance the level of academic excellence at the University. Misericordia has a strong tradition of academic excellence. This is part of its reputation and explains why it is successful in recruiting and retaining a high-quality student body. The foundation of academic excellence is a faculty who in their teaching and scholarship embody it and communicate it by setting high standards for their students and by the excitement they have for their several disciplines, maintained by their active engagement as scholars and researchers. The new president needs to be committed to academic excellence, to understand the lives and work of faculty, to support their research, and to support and expand the student/faculty research program already in place at the University.

To maintain a strong presence for MU in the local community and the surrounding region. Misericordia is part of a larger community and region. The new president will be expected to be present in the Dallas community and work in productive partnerships. At the same time, the new president will be expected to have a broader regional presence with the business community as well as the higher education community. Misericordia is part of the Mercy system of institutions. The new president will be expected to support and partner with other Mercy institutions in support of their common mission.



DESIRED ATTRIBUTES, EXPERIENCES, AND CREDENTIALS

Misericordia University seeks a new President with vision, creativity, and significant leadership experience in higher education. The ideal candidate will have:

- A doctoral degree and experience with teaching and scholarship
- Progressively more responsible leadership and administrative experience in higher education to the level of a dean, vice president or provost
- An understanding of the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic traditions and mission of the University, and a deep commitment to the charisms
- A record of successful experience with strategic planning
- An understanding of enrollment management and marketing and a history of success in increasing enrollments
- A record of successful fundraising and the aptitude to make this a central part of the work of the president
- An understanding of both liberal education and professional education and the ability to see how they can be combined creatively
- The ability to gain the confidence of the University administrative team, faculty, students, staff, alumni, and the greater Dallas communities through sustained, transparent, and visionary leadership
- Excellent communication skills, including speaking, writing, and listening
- A history of advocacy for social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Visibility on the campus and in the community and accessibility to students, faculty, and staff
- The ability to build effective teams that allow for both individual creativity and accountability
- The highest integrity

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The Presidential Search Committee will begin reviewing candidate materials in the first week of November and will continue through late November. Although applications will be received until the position is filled, materials should be submitted by Monday, November 16 to receive the most favorable consideration. Final selection and announcement of the next President will be made in early February and the new President will be invited to begin work on or about July 1, 2021.

Misericordia University is committed to recruiting a diverse, high-quality workforce dedicated to meeting the higher education needs of our community. Women and persons from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

Please address the letter of candidacy to Mr. Gregory Collins, Chair, Presidential Search Committee.

Applications must include:

- A letter of candidacy that responds directly to the items in the leadership agenda in this prospectus;
- A complete CV or resume;
- The names, phone numbers, and email addresses of five references, none of whom will be contacted without the expressed permission of the candidate.

All material will be received in full confidence and should be submitted electronically to

MisericordiaPresident@agbsearch.com by November 16.

Inquiries and nominations should be directed to:

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