REWRITING THE MYTHS
TAKING ON THE ENTRENCHED STEREOTYPES OF ACADEMIA
From the Dean

Since becoming dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, I have had the pleasure of and the responsibility to speak to alumni of GSAS from a variety of disciplines and throughout the world. These conversations are excellent opportunities to keep alumni abreast of the many changes that we have instituted in the school, as well as to engage them in its present and future. These exchanges have become also, I have found, occasions to provide insight into the scope of GSAS activities and its many responsibilities, since the latter seem to be imprecisely understood both by alumni and by current students.

This state of affairs is perhaps not surprising. The typical experience of a graduate student tends to revolve around his or her department or professional school, leaving “GSAS” to be perceived as occupying primarily an administrative role in the life of students. Our students know that GSAS manages the application process that allowed them entrance to this institution, and their diploma is signed by the Dean of the Graduate School; but in between those two momentous events, GSAS is also the agent that works diligently and with little fanfare to ensure that all students enjoy equitable circumstances across all departments and programs. But this discretion, one that is unobtrusive yet always ready to assist them whenever they need a mediator to negotiate some aspect of their academic career with their department, is our academic and existential safety net for our students. The Graduate School is the ever-present academic and existential safety net for the life of students. This state of affairs is perhaps not surprising. The typical experience of a graduate student tends to revolve around his or her department or professional school, leaving “GSAS” to be perceived as occupying primarily an administrative role in the life of students. Our students know that GSAS manages the application process that allowed them entrance to this institution, and their diploma is signed by the Dean of the Graduate School; but in between those two momentous events, GSAS has a background presence in the experience of most students.

This inconspicuousness should never obscure, though, the innumerable services GSAS provides to its students. The Graduate School is the ever-present academic and existential safety net for our charges, one that is unobtrusive yet always ready to assist them whenever they need a mediator to negotiate some aspect of their academic career with their department. GSAS is also the agent that works diligently and with little fanfare to ensure that all students enjoy equitable circumstances across all departments and programs. But this discretion, coupled with the fact that the lives of our students typically revolve around their academic home, makes it difficult for our students—who become our alumni in due course—to acquire a full sense of the ongoing personal impact of the Graduate School’s actions and initiatives.

It might be instructive, therefore, to take this opportunity to list what are, in my view, the principal duties of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences both with respect to the university and to our students:

• Enhance the research reputation of the university
• Supervise all research doctoral and masters programs at Columbia
• Approve the creation of pioneering new graduate programs
• Advocate for the interests of graduate education to the university, to the government, and to society
• Supervise closely all academic and student services related to graduate students in the university
• Serve as mediator between departments or schools and individual students or student organizations
• Represent the interests of graduate students to the university administration
• Oversee the professional development of graduate students in an ever-changing market
• Foster a sense of community among current students and alumni of the school
• Work to enhance the diversity (writ large) of the graduate student population
• Coordinate fundraising for graduate education at Columbia

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences works assiduously to address the needs and promote the interests of our students. This is our responsibility, our fundamental raison d’être, and, I am delighted to note, our pleasure. But we must also ensure that our students (and future alumni) become better acquainted with the ceaseless work that we do on their behalf, so that they may better guide us in that undertaking.
Women are having a bit of a moment.

A flurry of events in the first half of the year have made women the subject of a new popular discourse examining every aspect of their lives: their reproductive rights, their parenting styles, their work lives, and their status around the world.

Legislators have recently tried to limit access to and funding for reproductive services, domestic violence protections, and fair pay. Two separate covers of The Atlantic investigated the lives of single women and women in the workplace struggling to “have it all.” Time raised eyebrows for its cover featuring a woman breastfeeding her three-year-old son and a headline questioning whether readers were “mom enough.”

Women in academia have also received some extra attention.

The controversy surrounding Rush Limbaugh’s remarks about Georgetown law student Sandra Fluke began when she was invited to appear before a Congressional committee to discuss the lack of contraceptive coverage in the university’s student insurance plan, and the bizarre and abrupt removal and reinstatement of Teresa Sullivan, the first female president of the University of Virginia, garnered national attention and cast a light on the politics of academia.

A 2008 longitudinal study of chemistry Ph.D. candidates in the UK revealed that young women leave academia in far greater numbers than men, while a 2011 U.S. paper reported similar findings and suggested that women in STEM fields leave academia primarily due to interpersonal and family concerns, while men most often cite salary as the reason for their departure. “Departmental climate” was another major factor in women’s decisions to leave.

This year, a group of graduate students in the Middle East, South Asian, and African Studies department created an organization to address these academic gaps and other issues associated with being a woman studying those regions. The Women’s Allied Forum in Academics (WAFA), according to its mission statement, aims to provide “a comfortable forum where women can discuss the particular challenges that confront them as recent members of public intellectual discourse.”

“I was talking to women in small groups, and the same types of concerns kept coming up,” said Lakshmi Gopal, an M.A. student and co-founder of the group. “We
can affect intellectual discourse, family and lifestyle difficulties, the challenges with developing relationships with advisers, and how the way one talks or dresses can change classroom perceptions.

Some of the group's organizers reported that wearing a hijab while talking about gender rights confused their fellow students; others expressed feeling like a token spokesperson for a country because of an ancestral connection.

“One time I mentioned gender in class and suddenly became the gender girl because I just happened to suggest that we consider women while discussing a certain topic,” said Marianna Reis, another group organizer and an M.A. student in Islamic Studies.

Professors have similar memories of classroom awkwardness. Busch remembers studying traditions of erotic poetry in Sanskrit in a class full of men while at University of Chicago.

“Could you just imagine sitting there with a completely male environment? No matter how liberated you feel sexually, how self-confident you feel just having to translate line by line ... I mostly felt like I wanted to keep my head down,” she said, laughing.

Outside the classroom, it’s sometimes just difficult to find relatable mentors.

“Oftentimes your adviser is a male, and your colleagues that are other males can develop relationships that are outside of the classroom ... the classic boys’ locker room scenario,” Ullah said. “We want to strengthen intellectual bonds with each other—in a way, it is the girls’ locker room.”

Gopal added: “You’ll hear [about] women who are afraid of other women ... for us, this is not about climbing over the other to get the top but about creating networks.”

Lila Abu-Lughod, an anthropology professor who spoke to the group this fall, remembers the value of her colleagues in graduate school and at her first teaching job.

They've already won allies among male students as well as male and female professors, who hope that the group will push past old expectations of intellectuals.

“There is a cultural stereotype of the professor, which is the older man with a beard,” said associate professor Allison Busch. “What about a woman who wears skirts or nice shoes—does that count? There is a conformity to that idea that the next generation needs to do something about.”

WAFA’s strategy is to keep membership anonymous and department-specific. A sister group has formed for the English department, and there’s interest in establishing one for the sciences, according to Gopal.

“We’re concerned with the issues embodied with being a woman and being in this department,” she said. “We don’t want this to be a University-wide network. Each department should have their own group to connect with each other.”

The diversity within the MESAAS department is one of things that attracted Sahar Ullah, a Ph.D. candidate and another student organizer, to the group.

“We represent academics from three specific areas, which you don’t see at any other university in the country ... and it makes our conversations unique,” Ullah said.

So far the group has identified a few common topics of conversation, including: the lack of women professors in the department, understanding and reacting to sexual harassment, how gender and sexuality

shared the same themes, the same frustrations ... so we started to get together and see what would happen.”

“The Girls’ Locker Room”

The group started last October and met several times throughout the year, promoting meetings with provocative fliers featuring prominent female scholars and the headline “Not Butch, Not Bitch: Making Room for Female Intellectuals.”

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“One learns one is not alone,” she remarked. “I learned so much from them—from how to think to how to write a grant proposal to how to laugh at anxieties.”

The Pipeline

While MESAAS has 16 tenured male professors, there is only one tenured female professor—“an appalling number,” Busch called it.

“Most of the professors are men, the senior people are men, so what kind of model is that for women who are in our Ph.D. programs who are often 50 percent of the class and every bit as capable?” she said.

It’s a problem felt in all areas of higher education. A 2011 study by Deborah Kaminski and Cheryl Geisler reported that women who remain in academia are promoted at rates comparable to men; the disparity arises because so many women leave. The 2008 study of chemistry students, conducted by the UK Resource Centre for Women in “Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET),” pinpoints some of the reasons why women academics leave: they find the qualities of academic careers to be dissatisfying, they encounter a disproportionate number of barriers, and they have to make greater sacrifices than their male counterparts.

Busch added: “The pipelines of the past have been so male-dominated; even in 1994 when I was working on my Ph.D., the pipeline hadn’t produced many senior female scholars. It’s surprising that it’s not improving as much as we would like that to happen.”

Busch understands how this can play out for faculty and students.

“I can definitely see how it can be a struggle for women to participate,” she said, citing evening meetings and out-of-town travel as potential barriers for academics who are mothers. “When you’re going up for tenure, visibility is a criteria, so how can a woman make sure she maintains visibility in the field without being able to attend the same number of conferences or events?”
“You’re Being Sensitive Again...”

It’s not that MESAAS is alone in these issues, Busch and the group’s organizers stressed. Women in the sciences have been getting this level of scrutiny for a long time. A 2008 study in the journal *Perspectives on Politics* refers to the “quiet desperation” of women in academia.

MESAAS students recognize that the conversations taking place in their department themselves represent a kind of privilege, since most people share a similar political mind-set and vocabulary.

“We think it’s really cliché to say that orientalism exists, but in a lot of other places, it’s like, ‘Oh, that’s your opinion...You’re being sensitive again, brown Muslim girl.’ That sucks, and we’re lucky we don’t have that,” Ullah said. “People are really willing to listen and engage.”

Area studies comes with its own distinctive lens and curriculum biases, especially from the perspective of a woman studying the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa.

“The relationship of men and women of color is often wrongly characterized as a relationship of oppression,” Gopal said. “Like all relationships, these are dynamic and varied. As a South Asian woman, I want to speak about my womanhood in my own terms and not through borrowed or externally imposed lenses.”

A widely read piece in *Foreign Policy* by Mona Eltahawy asks, “Why Do They Hate Us?” The “they” refers to Middle Eastern governments and men while the “us” refers to Middle Eastern women. The polarizing piece succinctly declares “We have no freedoms because they hate us” and demands that the region do better, rejecting any historical explanation or sociocultural context for the treatment of women.

“There are lots of different approaches in the region with respect to femininity. There’s the African concept of womanhood, there’s the Hindu feminine ideal, and the Islamic dialogue around women, and these also vary across families and communities,” Gopal explains. “There are as many expressions of womanhood as there are women in this world.

Part of us coming together is to explore these different frameworks and challenge them.”

They’re also getting support from their curious male colleagues.

“It felt like the gender dynamic in our department changed as soon as our male colleagues found out that the women were getting together and talking,” Gopal said.

Reis added, “Our concerns are not just with male colleagues or professors; sexism and misogyny is internalized by everyone.”

Wendell Marsh, a Ph.D. student in the department studying Africa, said he completely understands the need for the group, especially when he considers the department’s research focus.

“WAFA is trying to address a lack of representation of women’s issues in the department,” he said. “Women or women’s issues would not emerge as a prominent feature if one made a survey of departmental scholarship, and WAFA wants to deal with this in intellectually productive ways.”

The group is planning for a packed year, including hosting speakers such as Busch, Abu-Lughod, and Anu Rao, and aiming to coordinate sexual harassment seminars for both students and faculty. Members are also editing a narrative book project, for which they’re soliciting submissions.

“One of the things we’re sensitive to is the ways in which feminisms have been used purportedly to ‘save’ women of our regions from ‘their men,’” Ullah said. “Stories just have a way of breaking down stereotypes.”

And that, Gopal added, is the point. By creating and promoting new narratives about women in the region, about women scholars, about women, period, they’ll start to see change.

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When Brown University President Ruth Simmons announced plans to step down last fall, the school’s governing corporation knew they had their work cut out for them. Simmons was the campus’s biggest icon, a pioneer who was the first black president in the Ivy League as well as the first female leader at Brown. Under her eleven-year tenure, the school raised more than $1.6 billion, increased its faculty ranks by 20 percent, and expanded its financial aid. At the university, she was a strong advocate for gender equality and minority achievement in academia, and left Providence with an 80 percent approval rating among students.

Replacing her would be tough...
But in March, Brown announced that it found a worthy successor in a Columbia-bred economist: Christina Paxson, M.A. ’85, Ph.D. ’87 and the celebrated dean of Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, was named the school’s nineteenth president — and second female head — starting July 1.

“Ruth Simmons did a tremendous job at raising the aspirations of the Brown community to not only provide an outstanding undergraduate education, but to also be a major research university,” Paxson said. “Brown is really doing something interesting and difficult, and I’m excited to be a part of figuring out how you do both at the same time.

“I’ve been there [at Princeton] for 26 years, so it was odd leaving, but by the time I left, I had so many goodbye parties that I think people were ready to see me go,” she said, laughing.

Paxson’s move to the helm of academic administration comes after a period of intense research and administrative productivity.

After becoming dean of the Woodrow Wilson School in 2009, Paxson oversaw major changes in the school, including the elimination of selective undergraduate admissions and a thorough revamp of the curriculum, all in the wake of a distracting lawsuit surrounding one of the school’s philanthropic funding partners. She also established the Julis-Rabinowitz Center for Public Policy and Finance and increased research opportunities related to domestic and international financial markets. At the same time, she maintained a brisk publication schedule, co-authoring papers examining the effect of economic factors on the health and welfare of aging populations and children in post-Katrina New Orleans, rural Ecuador, and sub-Saharan Africa.

“It is remarkable that she has maintained a high level of research productivity over the past several years, even with a heavy administrative load,” said Janet Currie, a Princeton economics professor and the director of the Center for Health and Wellbeing, an interdisciplinary research and education institute dedicated to health policy within the Woodrow Wilson School that Paxson founded in 2000.

“Her recent work on the long-term impacts of health in childhood, or about the impact of AIDS on health care budgets in Africa, or about the impact of Hurricane Katrina, is really first-rate, and widely cited.” Currie said.

Paxson attributes her focus on the socioeconomics of health, in particular the health of children and families, to her interests evolving as she grew to enjoy multidisciplinary research and adjusted to the strengths of the Princeton economics department.

In fact, her research interest at Columbia was markedly different; she studied labor supply under the mentorship of Joseph Altonji.

“She was the best student I ever had,” said Altonji, now a professor at Yale. “She just had real drive and energy level and raw intelligence with interpersonal skills ... the graduate student we all want.”

“I loved my time at Columbia. It was great,” Paxson said. “Being in a Ph.D. program was one of the most intense experiences of my life. I worked incredibly hard, and I loved it because there was a supportive, very successful group of people around me.”

“Ruth Simmons did a tremendous job at Princeton, initially serving as a lecturer and then as an assistant professor. Over the next two decades she earned five annual awards for teaching excellence and rose through the ranks of the Princeton economics department, becoming a full professor in 1997, then holding an endowed professorship and serving as chair of the economics department before being named dean of the Woodrow Wilson School.

During her time at Princeton she also became a mother to two sons, now 23 and 15. She and her husband have worked to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives—until June the family lived in Yardley, Pa., and both endured out-of-state commutes to their jobs. After the move to Providence, her husband kept a part-time apartment in New York while their teenage son enrolled in his current high school’s boarding program.

Paxson admits that combining her academic career with motherhood was not always easy.

“It’s a myth that academics are flexible,” she said. “People work very hard all the time, and I’m the type of person who likes to work in the office.”

It’s a common refrain, as more women admit to leaving academia because they feel unsupported and outnumbered. Indeed, Paxson said she experienced some of these challenges while she was just starting out in graduate school.

“When I was at Columbia, there were five women in our class. There was a time in Princeton where I was the only woman on the faculty to have tenure,” she said. “Those periods were hard. Not because I faced any discrimination, but because it was just kind of lonely.”

It was then that Paxson got more involved at the university level and befriended more women inside and outside her department. Princeton
It’s great that women are university presidents, and I think it’s great that it’s less of a big deal than it used to be,” she said. “I think it’s terrific to be the second woman president at Brown.”
There is, of course, a deeper resonance to Warren’s joke. In the past year Warren has written and spoken frequently about the significance of Occupy Wall Street, which he has called “the first time we’ve seen the emergence of a populist movement on the left since the 1930s.” Writing with Joe Lowndes of the University of Oregon in Dissent, Warren, a former community organizer, offered prescriptions for how Occupy Wall Street could strengthen its organizational structure and avoid being co-opted by the Democratic Party. In The Washington Post last fall he and coauthor Paul Frymer of Princeton invoked both Occupy Wall Street and the NBA lockout to illustrate the disproportionate power employers wield over employees, a disparity that has become all the more pronounced given the decline in union membership among the American labor force.

Though the initial momentum of the Occupy movement has now diminished somewhat, Warren is nonetheless a man to follow. He was recently appointed to the editorial board of The Nation, and has two books due out next year. Moreover, the issues he studies—labor, identity, and inequality—lie at the heart of the current crisis in the American polity.

Dorian Warren’s story begins on the South Side of Chicago, where he and his older brother Brent were born and raised by Bertella Warren, a single mother, elementary school teacher, and member of the Chicago Teachers Union. The family wasn’t wealthy, but she was able to provide a comfortable home for the boys, who never wanted for necessities. Like her own mother, a school custodian and a member of what would become the first local of the Service Employees International Union, Bertella had found a job that offered her children the possibility of a better life. Providing paid sick leave when the children were ill, a decent paycheck, family health insurance, and job security, the union offered the family a measure of financial stability. “But for the union,” Warren says, “we would have officially been living under the poverty line.”
Although Warren grew up in a union household, there wasn’t a lot of overt political discussion. His mother didn’t lecture him on the importance of the union. “It’s not like we had very explicit political conversation,” he says. “My parents and my grandparents weren’t activists.”

Yet while Bertella Warren may not have been an activist, she was active in the union. In 1980, 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1987, she walked out with fellow members of the Chicago Teachers Union. Lasting 15 days, the “Bye strike was the longest in the history of the union, and the last until the nine-day strike this fall. Warren, who walked the picket line with his mother, says he has only one memory of those strikes. He remembers his mother and her colleagues and her friends shouting at teachers who crossed the picket line. He recalled being startled to see these otherwise friendly teachers “yelling and screaming at their friends and colleagues.”

He says he’s not sure when it became clear, but he knew on some level that he had what he had “because my mother was in the union.”

Still, in high school, Warren wasn’t focused on politics—he was focused on sports. A member of his high school’s crew team and a swimmer, he also served as the sports editor at the high school paper. When he headed off to college at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, as a recruited swimmer, he planned to pursue a career in sports psychology.

But Warren arrived at Urbana-Champaign at a tumultuous time in American politics. It was fall of 1994, and the Newt Gingrich-led “Republican Revolution” was the longest in the history of the union, and the last until the nine-day strike this fall. Warren, who walked the picket line with his mother, says he has only one memory of those strikes. He remembers his mother and her colleagues and her friends shouting at teachers who crossed the picket line. He recalled being startled to see these otherwise friendly teachers “yelling and screaming at their friends and colleagues.”

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The following year, an acquaintance who knew Jesse Jackson, Jr., then seeking an open Congressional seat in Chicago, invited Warren to come on board the campaign. He did, and spent his sophomore fall commuting home on weekends to Operation PUSH headquarters, crunching numbers for the campaign’s voter database.

Jackson’s campaign and his victory were thrilling for Warren, but he was also left disillusioned with the dirtiness of machine politics. “Before that campaign,” he says, “I remember thinking ‘Maybe I want to run for office. And after that campaign, I remember thinking ‘I never want to run for office.’” His thirst to be involved in politics, though, was heightened, not slaked.

Back on campus, Warren founded a chapter of the Black Student Leadership Network, which sought to recreate the organizing power of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Members of the Midwest Academy, a major center for community organizing, visited Warren’s BSLN chapter and provided him with his first formal training in the discipline. His junior year, he spent a semester working as an intern for the Civil Rights Coalition in Washington, D.C. “I had this whole transformation in that direction,” he says. With that career path in mind, Warren set out to do something that so many college seniors, particularly those interested in the world of politics, do: apply to law school.

He might have gone down that path, but his college advisor, Dianne Pinderhughes, a political science professor with whom Warren had studied and done research, told him she would only sign off on a recommendation if he also applied to graduate school. Warren was skeptical—he wanted to effect political change, not spend his days sitting in an office reading books and writing. He describes the exchange with Pinderhughes in characteristically blunt terms: “I said, ‘I don’t really want to go to grad school, because no offense, but academics don’t do shit.’”

Many professors would have sent Warren on his way. But Pinderhughes took this brash college senior’s critique in stride and pointed out that being a scholar doesn’t preclude one from activism. Warren took heed, and wound up in the political science graduate program at Yale.

Warren went to New Haven hoping to carve out a path as a scholar-activist, and within two weeks of his arrival he was organizing teaching assistants in the political science department. In his academic life, he gravitated toward Cathy Cohen, now at the University of Chicago, whose scholarship and activism includes work on the challenges facing traditionally marginalized groups like people of color, the LGBT community, and women. His first academic article, on labor-community coalitions in New Haven, was co-written with Cohen.

In his dissertation, Warren drew upon themes critical to Cohen’s work, exploring the role of intersecting identities such as race, class, and gender in the American labor movement. Taking another page from Cohen’s book, Warren chose a topic that brought him out of the library and into the streets. He returned to Chicago for a year to follow UNITE-HERE Local 1, the hotel workers’ union, as a “participant-observer.” He interviewed workers and walked picket lines to understand how the presence of workers from marginalized groups could affect a union’s tactics and aims. His dissertation, “A New Labor Movement for a New Century? The Incorporation of Marginalized Workers in U.S. Unions,” is a combination of first-person ethnography and survey of the contemporary American labor movement. An expanded version of the dissertation will be published next year.

A fter graduating from Yale, Warren taught briefly at the University of Chicago, then landed job offers from Harvard and Columbia. He opted for Columbia, he says, in large part because of the late Manning Marable, who served as the M. Moran Weston and Black Alumni Council Professor of African-American Studies and held appointments in history and public affairs. A founding member of the Black Radical Congress, the author of the nationally syndicated column “Along the Color Line,” and a lifelong crusader for social justice, Marable actively recruited Warren to Columbia, and Warren notes that he found a model for his own career in the senior scholar’s “political commitment and vision and scholarship.” Marable was prolific in both his activism, which touched areas from civil rights to unionism to the anti-death-penalty movement, and his scholarship, authoring numerous books on race and class in American life, as well as a landmark 600-page biography of Malcolm X that was published in April 2011, just days after his death.

In choosing Columbia, Warren signaled his desire to follow in Marable’s footsteps, and to keep his feet planted in both worlds, academic and activism.
content or satisfied simply being an academic in the Ivory Tower holed up from the rest of society.” Although he focused primarily on research and teaching in his first years at Columbia—“I didn’t want my colleagues to view me as somehow not as serious about my intellectual work,” he says—with time he felt the urge to speak out.

“There have been just too many times I’ve been watching something and thinking, ‘That person is an idiot, they don’t know what they’re talking about, they have no idea what’s happening on the ground,’” he says. “It’s been in the last two years where I’ve found my voice—and found my voice based on my experience and expertise. I bring something to the table that very few people can, in terms of my view of the landscape of the labor movement and my view of the landscape of community organizing in this country, and the ability to connect that up with social science research on inequality and social movements and a range of political change efforts. I think of myself now as a bridge person between organizers and activists and people trying to make change around the country and the world.”

For Melissa Harris-Perry, who teaches political science at Tulane in addition to hosting her own show on MSNBC, this mind-set is common among people from backgrounds underrepresented in the academy. “It’s a sense of urgency ... of coming from communities that can’t spare the brain power to ... sit in the corner.” She and Warren met at the University of Chicago as young, progressive black scholars and acolytes of Cathy Cohen.

Harris-Perry and Warren may be part of what the Rev. Al Sharpton—a frequent guest on “Melissa Harris-Perry” and the host of his own show on MSNBC, “Politics Nation”—calls a “new vanguard” of thinkers and activists, but their brand of scholarly activism has deep roots. “[W.E.B.] Du Bois and others—yes, they had academic credentials and a range of political change efforts. I think of myself now as a bridge person between organizers and activists and people trying to make change around the country and the world.”

Warren strives to teach his students of the tremendous power an organized group of people can wield—a message that can feel somewhat incongruous in the era of Citizens United and super PACs. Yet for a man so committed to social justice and consequently so aware of the problems of the American system, Warren is surprisingly optimistic. Speaking of his ancestors, who survived slavery and Jim Crow laws, he says that if they “could still be optimistic enough to organize, then I have to be optimistic now.” He knows what it means to participate “in efforts to change people’s lives,” efforts like fighting for a union contract. And he knows, as an activist, as an academic, and from his own family, that those things make a difference. “Time has not run out—we can actually still really change the world. For future generations and generations and generations.”

And, as Ira Katznelson, the Ruggles Professor of Political Science and History, notes, it is Warren’s scholarly work that distinguishes him from most pundits on the talk-show circuit. “Dorian’s public persona and argumentation gains strength and legitimacy through his scholarly writings,” Katznelson says. “That is, his voice is not one simply as a media commentator, but as a person who has thought about and deeply studied fundamental concerns.”

Katznelson also points out that as “a person who manages to bridge the world of academia and the wider public,” Warren is a particularly good fit for the School of International and Public Affairs (where he also holds an appointment) and its mission of teaching both theory and praxis.

Mary Martha Douglas, CC ’10, SIPA ’12, who took Warren’s senior seminar on community organizing, found that Warren’s pedagogy drove her to think in terms of action. The course, she says, “solidified my belief that I was meant to do something with my education greater than just reading big books.”


“It’s been in the last two years where I’ve found my voice—and found my voice based on my experience and expertise. I bring something to the table that very few people can, in terms of my view of the landscape of the labor movement and my view of the landscape of community organizing in this country, and the ability to connect that up with social science research on inequality and social movements and a range of political change efforts.”
Sabers and Shteyngart

Olympian James Williams, M.A. ’09

by Robert Ast

After earning a silver medal as a sabreist for the U.S. men’s fencing team at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, James Williams did something rather unusual for an Olympic athlete: he returned to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to complete his Master’s degree in Slavic Cultures.

Williams grew up in Sacramento and began fencing at age nine. Although he showed promise and competed nationally, he didn’t qualify for the under-16 or under-19 national teams. His breakthrough came when he moved to New York in 2003 to attend Columbia College and fence under Columbia’s legendary coaches George Kolombatovich and Aladar Kogler.
Laura Paler, Aceh

required a lot of dedication and determination. It took a lot of hard work and a lot of coffee.”

championships in St. Petersburg. It took a lot of hard work and a lot of coffee. “I was the youngest team member, but in London I had to be more observant and follow my teammates’ example,” he said. “This time I had to lead more.”

Olympic fencing unfolds over the course of two days, with one day dedicated to the individual competition and one to the team competition. In the individual competition, on July 29, Williams fell to the eventual bronze medalist, Nikolay Kovalev. “James fenced very well and even though he lost to Kovalev his first bout, showed strong fencing,” Gelman said. “Kovalev won bronze and fenced great that day.”

The U.S. began the team competition on August 4 with a hard-fought loss to Russia before succumbing to China and Belarus and finishing in eighth place. “I think we all fenced really hard,” Williams said. “We had some amazing competitors and it was their day.”

Facing the Russians in both the individual and team competitions gave Williams an opportunity to use his Russian. “I am on friendly terms with the Russian team,” he noted. “We exchange Apple products and caviar frequently during the regular season.”

With the Olympics over, Williams is ready to begin the next chapter of his life. “I think two Olympics is good for me,” he notes. “I’m looking for a job right now and am excited to explore some other interests.”

After earning his Master’s degree, Williams didn’t entirely leave Columbia—taking classes in accounting, corporate finance, mathematics, and Russian through the School of Continuing Education—but fencing once again became his primary pursuit.

After his junior year in high school, Williams was a member of the U.S. Men’s Saber Team. The team qualified for the Olympics as an alternate and the USA Fencing National Championship.

For the U.S. Men’s Saber Team. The team qualified for the Olympics as an alternate and the USA Fencing National Championship.

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Louis Parks
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, M.A. 1995, Ancient Studies
Columbia Business School, M.B.A. 2003
School of General Studies, B.A. 2012, Psychology

After previously serving as vice president and chair of the development committee for the GSAS Alumni Association, in April Louis Parks was named president of the GSAS Alumni Association Board; in May he earned a second bachelor’s degree, summa cum laude, from the School of General Studies as a psychology major.

He spoke with Superscript to discuss the three degrees he’s earned at Columbia and his plans for the Alumni Association.

You have studied a variety of things at Columbia—classical history and psychology, in addition to earning an MBA. What prompted you to pursue degrees in those fields?

Education, whether formal or informal, should be a lifelong pursuit. With few exceptions, a majority of people will spend their lives interacting with others in order to achieve their and/or their organizations’ objectives. While it is an asset to have knowledge specific to one’s professional endeavors (an MBA to understand finance, a J.D. to understand and practice law, etc.), it is the ability to identify and work with individuals’ unique personalities and abilities that define successful outcomes.

To that end, I have always felt a background in psychology, philosophy, and classical history were requirements which enable insight into motivations and behaviors. By acquiring such insights, I could build solid relationships based on truth and moral premises, avoid pitfalls that occurred in the past, and operate a business according to ethical standards that my competition would consistently violate.

Through my many classes at Columbia, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, I challenged and was challenged by professors who were experts in these various fields. From Socratic method to breakout group learning, I mastered material that improved my personal competencies and acquired skills. I could not have done so without the dedication to teaching and learning that my Columbia professors exhibited day in and out.

Do you see any overlap between those studies and your work in finance?

The short answer is “yes.” All of my studies have enabled me to better understand how to work well with others, whether they are competitors or team members. Successful outcomes in the field of finance usually depend upon convincing someone else to take the other side of a trade or other financial investment. The better you understand the history of prior outcomes, as well as understand why people act as they do (individually or as a group), the easier it is to achieve financial objectives and improve profitable outcomes for you, your clients, and your organization.

What are some of the initiatives you are planning to work on as president?

I believe that our newly revised bylaws will allow the GSAS Alumni Association to achieve multiple goals. First and foremost is the goal of providing current and past students with a stronger association with Columbia. I hope to accomplish this objective through the work of our committees and their dedicated members.

I, along with Dean Alonso and the members on the Board, plan to actively present our current students and alumni with outreach that relates directly to their studies, departments, and Master’s/Ph.D. matriculation. We want to provide discussion and possible solutions to issues regarding financial concerns, housing, academic guidance, and their social environment.

For our alumni, we want to make networking opportunities available, along with events and ways in which to become involved with the future of GSAS. While we would like to accomplish the perfect atmosphere for all students and alumni to thrive at Columbia, we will also be realistic and work on what are deemed the most important challenges that we could likely impact in a positive manner.

What’s one thing you would like to tell alumni about GSAS?

I would like our alumni to know that their association with GSAS should not end after graduation, nor should it restart once they are in the midst of retirement. GSAS should endeavor to have each student woven into its fabric and give every alumnus/a the feeling of “coming home” to Columbia as often as possible. With our many social events, information sessions, publications, and electronic discussion venues, GSAS wants to be an active and intimate part of the lives of its graduates at all stages of their lives.
The Black Hole of Empire
Partha Chatterjee, Political Science
Partha Chatterjee explores how the story of the “black hole of Calcutta”—in which 123 European prisoners died in cramped conditions—fostered the ideological foundations for the British imperial rule and territorial control in India.

At the Violet Hour
Sarah Cole, English and Comparative Literature
Sarah Cole argues that modernism emerged as an imaginative response to the devastating events that defined the period, including the chaos of anarchist bombings, World War I, the Irish uprising, and the Spanish Civil War. Combining historical detail with resourceful readings of fiction, poetry, journalism, photographs, and other cultural materials, At the Violet Hour explores the strange intimacy between modernist aesthetics and violence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Racecraft
Barbara Fields, History
Writing with sociologist Karen E. Fields, Barbara J. Fields argues, contrary to the received narrative that racism stems from the perception of human difference, that instead the practice of racism produces the illusion of race, through a process they call “racecraft.”

Ignorance
Stuart Firestein, Biology
Stuart Firestein examines how ignorance drives scientific progress, showing how scientists use ignorance to program their work, to identify what should be done, what the next steps are, and where they should concentrate their energies to look for connections to other research and resist apparently settled questions.

The Price of the Ticket
Fredrick Harris, Political Science
In The Price of the Ticket, Fredrick Harris examines President Barack Obama’s career in the context of decades of black activism, arguing that his election undermined the very movement that made it possible.

Governing the World
Mark Mazower, History
Mark Mazower traces the history of global cooperation between nations and peoples through the lens of international institutions and argues that the current dialectic between ideals and power politics in the international arena is just another stage in an epic two-hundred-year story.

Perpetual War
Bruce Robbins, English and Comparative Literature
In Perpetual War Bruce Robbins takes stock of the “new cosmopolitanism” movement, rethinking his own commitment and reflecting on the responsibilities of American intellectuals today. How will the declining economic and political hegemony of the United States affect the notion of cosmopolitanism, in which an individual’s primary loyalty is given to the good of humanity as a whole, even if it conflicts with loyalty to the interests of one’s own nation?

Gravity’s Engines
Caleb Scharf, Astrophysics
In Gravity’s Engines Caleb Scharf engages with our deepest questions about the universe and examines how black holes are not simply “chasms in space-time” from which no light escapes, instead, they emit beams and clouds of matter and help to rearrange the cosmos around them.

Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons
Haruo Shirane, ’74CC, M.Phil. ’79, Ph.D. ’83, East Asian Languages and Cultures
Elegant representations of nature and the four seasons populate a wide range of Japanese genres and media, from poetry and screen painting to tea ceremonies, flower arrangements, and annual observances. Shirane shows how, when, and why this practice developed and explicates the richly encoded social, religious, and political meanings of this imagery.
Gravity in Art
Mary D. Edwards. ’66GS, M.Phil. ’75, Ph.D. ’86, Art History and Archaeology, and Elizabeth Bailey, editors

Gravity in Art. In a revolutionary revisionist reassessment of history, Scherr reexamines Jefferson’s relationship to Haiti (then known as St. Domingue). Underlying mainstream interpretations, Scherr reveals through extensive research that Jefferson acted generally in favor of the Haitian Revolution.

Inner Peace—Global Impact
Kathryn Goldman-Schuylar. M.Phil. ’73, Ph.D. ’79, Sociology

With contributions from Tibetan lamas like Tharchin Rinpoche as well as a wide range of Western thought leaders, Kathryn Goldman-Schuylar uses first-person narratives, scholarly research, and commentaries by noted social scientists to present a way in which the principles of Tibetan traditions can bring new depth and resilience to today’s leaders.

In Search of Polin
Gary S. Schiff, M.A. ’70, Ph.D. ’73, Political Science

Tackling a unique, multi-faceted approach to the 1,000 years of Polish Jewish history in this volume, Gary S. Schiff combines academic scholarship with his own family’s long history, insightful travel experiences, and candid observations. From its earliest medieval days, to its “golden years” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to its subsequent decline and Poland’s three-way partition in the eighteenth century, to its ultimate destruction in the Holocaust and its mini-revival today, the Jewish community of Poland—the world’s largest for 500 years—comes to life again.

Dispensing Beauty in New York and Beyond
Annette Blaugrund, M.A. ’78, M.Phil. ’81, Ph.D. ’87, Art History and Archaeology

Annette Blaugrund delves into the life of Harriet Hubbard Ayer, whose cosmetics company was the first of its kind to be owned and operated by a woman. Overcoming years of injustice in which she was punished for her accomplishments and independence, this former Chicago socialite eventually became the highest paid newspaperwoman in the United States, editing the women’s pages of Joseph Pulitzer’s New York World.

Thomas Jefferson’s Haitian Policy: Myths and Realities
Arthur Scherr, M.A. ’74, History

In a revolutionary revisionist reassessment of history, Scherr reexamines Jefferson’s relationship to Haiti (then known as St. Domingue). Underlying mainstream interpretations, Scherr reveals through extensive research that Jefferson acted generally in favor of the Haitian Revolution.

Very Rich is an inspiring, easy-to-use guide which gives you numerous creative ideas on how to reap the many benefits of giving. It’s all about your feeling connected to deriving immeasurable pleasure from helping others.
Choral Identity and the Chorus of Elders in Greek Tragedy
U.S. Dhuga, M.A. ’02, M.Phil. ’05, Ph.D. ’06, Classics

Through a close reading of the speech, song, and choreography among choruses of elders in Greek tragedy, U.S. Dhuga overturns previous assumptions, arguing that they are not societally marginal but rather central to the tragic action.

Backward Ran Sentences
Thomas Vinciguerra, CC ’85, ’86, MA ’90, English and Comparative Literature

In his biographical sketch of Wolcott Gibbs, the longtime theater critic for The New Yorker, Vinciguerra gathers a generous sampling of his finest work across an impressive range of genres, bringing a brilliant, multitalented writer of incomparable wit to a new age of readers.

Nation and Nurture in Seventeenth-Century English Literature
Rachel Trubowitz, M.A. ’77, M.Phil. ’80, Ph.D. ’85, English and Comparative Literature

Connecting changing seventeenth-century English views of maternal nurture to the rise of the modern nation, Rachel Trubowitz demonstrates that shifting perspectives on Judeo-Christian relations deeply informed the period’s reassessment of “body politic.”

The Cultural Politics of Twentieth-Century Spanish Theater
Carey Kasten, M.A. ’99, M.Phil. ’03, Ph.D. ’06, Spanish and Portuguese

Carey Kasten argues that twentieth-century artists used the Golden Age Eucharist play, known as autos sacramentales, to reassess the way politics and the arts interact in the Spanish nation’s past and present, and to posit new ideas for future relations between the state and the national culture industry.

An Unexpected Guest
Anne Korkeakivi, M.A. ’86, English and Comparative Literature

A debut novel with echoes of Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, An Unexpected Guest demonstrates how even the simple act of hosting a dinner party can be bound up with the complexities of the age of terrorism.
Jennifer Marie James. The terms of empire and the commodification of difference in the post-1945 American novel. Sponsor: Mari- gene La Rose. (Distinction)


Environmental Health Sciences
Christine Marie George. A cluster-based randomized controlled trial promoting community participation in arsenic mitigation efforts in Bangladesh. Sponsor: Joseph H. Graziano.

French and Romance Philology

Genetics and Development


Germanic Languages
Annie Elizabeth Falk. The imagination of the Jewish table in German and Central European literature, 1530-1914. Sponsor: Mark Anderson and Dorothea von Münik.

Agnisikla Lektog. Possessed by the other: Dyak possesses and modern Jewish identity in twentieth-century Jewish literature and beyond. Sponsor: Jeremy Dauber. (Distinction)


Molecular and Nutritional Medicine


Sofia Frangiskou. Exploring a novel mechanism of regulation of the TNFR family member FasR. Sponsor: Sanaar Gosh.  

Middle East, South Asian, and Balkan Studies
Audrey Angelique Truscheke. Cos- mopolitan encounters: Sankirti and Persians at the Mughal court. Sponsor: Sheldon Pollock. (Distinction)

Pathology and Molecular Medicine

Music
Lori Lynden. Ethnomusicology of modern music in Morocco and Spain. Sponsor: Anna Maria Ochoa.


Mathematics
Adam Joshua Jacob. Limiting prop- erties of certain geometric flows in complex geometry. Sponsor: Peter Ozsváth.  

Pablo M. Pinto. On two pines decays from lattice QCD delta is>1/2 rule and CP violation. Sponsor: Nor- man H. Christ.  

Psychology
Brian Thomas Denney. Examining the temporal dynamics of emotion regulation via cognitive reappraisal.  

Social Sciences

Are you a Russian or a Westerner? If you talk for me, I can talk for you. Sponsor: Denise Burnett.

Socioeconomic Sciences
Maria Dulce Ferreira Natividade. Reproductive politics, religion, and state governance in the Philip- pines. Sponsor: Carole S. Vance. (Distinctin)  

Sustainable Development

Teachers College: New Anthropology
Kamal Yilmaz. Indigenous diver- sity of Turkish pastimes from political violence as site of passage: Voices from the cracks of the social structure. Sponsor: Charles C. Harrington.

Teachers College: Applied Behavioral Science

Teachers College: Applied Clinical Psychology
Abigail Suzanne Kluchin. The affect of affect. Sponsor: R. C. Baer. (Distinction)

Teachers College: Cognitive Stud- ies in Education

Seokmin Kang. As I see so, you shall. Sponsor: Mark Seto.

Teachers College: Comparative and International Education

Suzanne Martínez Restrepo. The economic impact of bilingual education on sustainable development and human capital. Sponsor: Douglas Greer.

Teachers College: Cultural Studies

Agnieszka Legutko. Possessed in German and German-Jewish Germanic Languages
Sponsor: Rando Allikmets.

function analysis of Hox-cofactor sels, airways, and cartilage rings: Genetics and Development
Joanna Stalnaker. The French revolution. Sponsor: Andrew G. Rundle. (Distinction)

and aggressive prostate cancer: Graziano.

in Bangladesh. Sponsor: Joseph H.  


Lara J. Gellatly. The merits of research: Medicine, empire, and ideology in Yugoslavia under the Nazi occupation. Sponsor: Mark A. Graber.

Anita Antic. Psychiatry at war: Psychiatric care and political ideology in Yugoslavia under the Nazi occupation. Sponsor: Mark A. Graber.

Dan Aaron. Dead bodies and forensic science: Cultures of exper- tise in China, 1800-1949. Sponsor: Madeline Zilm. (Distinction)

Announcements

Professors MARIA CHUDNOVS

y, Mathematics and Industrial Engi

eering and Operations Research, and TERRY PLANK, M.A. ’87, M.

Ph.D. ’93, Earth and Environmental Sciences, were named MacArthur Fellows for 2012.

Ph.D. candidates DANIEL DUZDEVICH, ’09CC, M.A. ’12, Biological Sciences, and ABDULRAHMAN EL-SAYED, an M.D./Ph.D. candi
date at the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Mailman School of Public Health, have both received the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans.

WILLIAM DEJONG-LAMBERT, ’05SIPA/GSAS, received a Science, Technology and Society grant from the National Science Foundation to fund the Second International Work

shop on Lysenkoism, hosted by the University of Vienna.

The Columbia Faculty Development Committee named NESLIHAN SENOCAK, assistant professor of history, the MacDonald Summer Fellow for 2012 and awarded special rec
ognition to her proposal to conduct archival research in England explor

ing scholarly learning’s importance in the Roman Catholic clergy.

NATASHA LIGHTFOOT, assistant professor of history, has been award
ned a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Ford Foundation/National Research Council for 2012-2013.

Professor ELIZABETH BLACKMAR has been awarded a Cullman Fellow
ship.

MAE NGAI, M.A. ’93, M.Phil. ’95, Ph.D. ’98, History, professor of his
tory and the Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies, received a fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars as well as a Cullman Fellowship.

Doctoral candidate MEHA JAIN, M.A. ’11, M.Phil. ’11, Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology, received a National Geographic Explorers award.

Doctoral candidate MEGAN CAT-TAU, Ecology, Evolution, and En
vironmental Biology, received a Fulbright scholarship to conduct research in Indonesia.

M.A. candidate ELISA ORDWAY, Conservation Biology, and doctoral candidates SUSAN CLARK, Astron
omy, ADRIAN PRICE-WHELAN, Astronomy, and DANYI WU, Biologi
cal Sciences, received NSF Graduate Research Fellowships.

Doctoral candidate DYLAN RAHE, M. A. ’12, Biological Sciences, received a National Research Service Award.

Doctoral candidate MATTHEW FAGAN, M.Phil. ’11, Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology, won the Ta Liang Memorial Award.

The late MANNING MARABLE, the M. Moran Weston/Black Alumni Council Professor of African Ameri
can Studies, was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his biography Malcolm X: A Life of Rein
vention.

Associate Professor DAVID LURIE, M.A. ’96, M.Phil. ’98, Ph.D. ’01, East Asian Languages and Cultures, received the Lionel Trilling Award for his book Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing.

MATT JONES, James R. Barker As

sociate Professor of Contemporary Civilization, received a 3-year Mellon New Directions grant, and a Guggen
heim Fellowship in the Humanities (History of Science, Technology, and Economics).

Doctoral candidates CARLOS MON
TES-GALDÓN, M.A. ’11, M.Phil. ’12, Economics, ANJULI KOLB, M.A. ’06, M.Phil. ’08, English and Comparative Literature, and JOSEPH WOO, Chemical Engineer

ing, received Columbia’s Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching.

MATT JONES, James R. Barker As

sociate Professor of Contemporary Civilization, received a 3-year Mellon New Directions grant, and a Guggen
heim Fellowship in the Humanities (History of Science, Technology, and Economics).

Ph.D. candidate FLORENCE LAROCHE, M.A. ’11, Political Sci
ence, has been awarded a Trudeau Scholarship.

ELLIOTT BERNSTEIN, M.A. ’07, East Asian Languages and Cultures, has published a new bilingual Chi

ese-English textbook, 100 Topics in Business English, with Capital Normal University Press in Beijing.
What inspires Frank Chiodi to support GSAS?

As a professional in the institutional investment sector, Frank Chiodi has worked with some of the industry’s most prestigious firms and brightest individuals. When choosing to pursue a graduate degree, Frank applied the same parameters, and aimed high. For Frank, that “holy grail” was Columbia University. Frank credits his GSAS degree with improving his thinking, writing, and ability to communicate effectively—critical to his professional success.

Today, Frank feels a responsibility to give back to the institution that propelled his future forward, and to invest in the GSAS students who are the next generation of leaders. When many alumni join together, each giving what he or she is able, the effect is one of meaningful impact for GSAS students, today and tomorrow. Frank is proud to be part of that Columbia Tradition.

Frank Chiodi
American Studies, MA ’00

GSAS Annual Fund

Each year, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences depends on the support of alumni and friends who give to the Annual Fund. The GSAS Annual Fund is current-use income that bridges the gap between the real cost of a graduate education and the funding students receive from the University and outside sources. All gifts to the GSAS Annual Fund go directly to financial aid for graduate study.

GSAS Leadership Society

The GSAS Leadership Society has helped Columbia University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences sustain its tradition of philanthropy by recognizing its most loyal and generous supporters. Society giving plays a key role in the success of the GSAS Annual Fund. Becoming a member makes a powerful statement about how much alumni value a GSAS education. Last year, dedicated alumni, parents, and friends contributions at the Society level represented more than 60% of total Fund dollars.

We are pleased to recognize our generous donors whose gifts were received by Columbia University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012. Thank you for your support.

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<tr>
<th>CUMULATIVE ANNUAL GIFT</th>
<th>IMPACT ON A GSAS STUDENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>$25,000+</td>
<td>Stipend for 1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>Fellowship for 1 year (or 3 summers funded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$5,000 - $9,999</td>
<td>Summer funding for 1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2,500 - $4,999</td>
<td>Health fees for 1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,000 - $2,499*</td>
<td>Facilities fees for 1 year</td>
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* Classes 0-9 years since graduation will qualify with cumulative annual giving of $500
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