



# SRC 2020/2021 Annual Report

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## Constitutional Responsibilities

“Chapter 3, section 21(1), (2), (3), (5) and (7) of the student constitution is where the portfolio to be and to draw its responsibilities from. Namely to (1) to act in the best interest of students and to actively promote students’ rights under (11), to represent students at – (a) the University Council; (b) the Senate; (c) the Institutional Forum; (d) other committees, bodies and functionaries of the University; and (e) national and international student bodies; (3) to evaluate the University policy and give input in the formulation thereof (5) facilitate projects and initiatives to the benefit of students and to (7) formulate and maintain policy in order to ensure that the Student Representative Council performs its functions and duties effectively.” – Chloe Krieger (Student wellness 2019/20)

2021 is the year in which the student constitution will be reviewed, and with the cancellation of the Student Success portfolio and the creation of the Student Financial Access portfolio, the duties of the Student Wellness portfolio may also change constitutionally.

## Portfolio Overview

The portfolio has gone through many evolutions over the past few years, the most notable occurring in the 2018/19 term when a committee was created to draft the Mental Health Policy. The policy draft was both influenced by, and influenced, discussions around mental health at Stellenbosch University (SU). My predecessor’s term was unfortunately heavily impacted by the global coronavirus (Covid-19)

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pandemic. It is however evident through her plans, and her speeches during the caucuses, that she had a great motivation to broaden and destigmatize the conversation around mental health.

I am of the strong opinion that there are many factors that affect one's mental wellness, besides obvious mental illness, and it is for this reason that the 2020/21 plan for this portfolio is to spend at least a month specifically focusing on the different aspects of the Wellness Wheel in an effort to improve overall well-being.

## Committees / Task Teams

- **SRC Executive** - The SRC Executive meets once a week to discuss ongoing developments within the SRC and student body. The Committee also meets with RMT (Rectorate Management Team) and the Student Governance team to discuss the work that the SRC has planned for the term. The committee also decides on the allocation of portfolios within the SRC.
- **Senate** - The senate of a public higher education institution is accountable to the council for the academic and research functions of the public higher education institution and must perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the council.
- **Bursaries and Loans Committee** - This committee engages on policy and discussion around existing university-offered bursary programs and new programs that will be implemented.

## Year Overview

### Term I

My plan for the first term was to really settle in well and as comfortably as possible. The term was filled with many (many) trainings and sessions and possibly even more introductions. It was strange adjusting in the virtual space and I do still feel a bit disconnected from my team because I have yet to meet 80% of them in person.

My goals for Term I were as follows:

- Develop a relationship with CSCD staff
- Spread awareness about mental wellness ahead of exam season
- Establish food-security internal SRC task team
- Make 9 social media posts about student wellness
- Allow students access to CSCD events and services

Of the 5 goals listed above, I was able to successfully achieve 3 of them and attempt at the last one (I think it is always a trying process). The one thing I have not done is create an internal SRC task team, due to fact that there are still issues with the prototype of the food-security program we hope to implement in Stellenbosch. I also worry that there may be an issue of redundancy unless I really get to know exactly what food security programs are available to the students of Stellenbosch campus. With the development of the Student Financial Access portfolio – currently run by Gina Sibanda – there is also a blurriness with regards to who should take on the food security issue. At current, Gina and I are having discussions on the topic.

I started a Student Wellness Instagram page. We currently have 195 followers and are hoping to reach 200 by the end of the first academic term of 2021. The page made posts related to mental health

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awareness as well as the talks and sessions being held by the CSCD in October 2021. There are also specific posts about how to book CSCD appointments during the Covid-19 period and posts promoting the new mental health policy draft. The page has also now released 2 Highlights focused on WHO covid-19 advice and updates on the SA Lockdown restrictions.

I have also opened up applications for the Student Wellness committee. I had initially planned to do so during the first academic term, however I felt it would be easier to start early. I had originally budgeted for a maximum of 20 committee members (because I believed that I would not get more than that number of applicants), however the applicants surpassed that number in just 4 days. The applications will officially close on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, just to allow for fair time to apply. I must still decide on the system by which I will be electing committee members.

I am still in the process of planning the Financial Wellness month which will take place in March 2021. I will be collaborating with Masixole Ndamandama, the Senior Prim Committee chairperson. I have also been speaking with the CSCD staff and Unopachido Mubaiwa (a master's student) about mental health awareness initiatives for the 2021 year.

The Senate has had one sitting to date – late November. The meeting focused on welcoming and introducing new committee members and no new points were raised from the SRC's side. There have been 2 Bursaries and Loans committee sittings to date. I was unfortunately only able to attend the one due to academic obligations during the second one. The first sitting was the last one for the 2020 year and focused on introducing the changes to the Recruitment Bursary scheme as well as the introduction of the new Post-graduate bursary/funding system. The meeting also briefly discussed the shutting down of the SU loans system. There was a single point raised by the SRC regarding the accommodation of non-residence students during the A4 exams. At the meeting the response was that the issue was "in discussion". However during the A4 period during January 2021, many issues came to light and many non-residence students struggled with issues regarding accommodation. We hope that, should similar circumstances arise in 2021/22, the committee will be able to adequately prepare for any issues that may arise.

## Term 2

### Original term 1 goals

1. Set up 3 financial wellness talks
2. Contact banks for information around loans and funding and student account options
3. Begin meetings about food security initiative
4. Set up student interest groups (at least 3)
5. Have a successful physical wellness month
6. Establish a student wellness committee

### Feedback on these goals

1. **Financial wellness talks:** On February the 18<sup>th</sup> 2021, I had my first meeting with the Financial Sector Conduct Authority's Consumer Education Division (FSCA CED) via MS Teams. The CED team is lead by Mr Lyndwill Clarke who was very enthusiastic about the fact that I had reached out to him and saw the need to offer financial education sessions for students. The CED offers fantastic financial services and money-management information and

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provides education sessions all free-of-charge. With the FSCA we organised 3 financial wellness talks to take place during the month of March (which is global finance month). The plan coincided well with the FSCA's already planned *Money Smart Week*. The three talks took place on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and the topics discussed were: *Savings and Investments*, *Credit Scores* and *Financial scams*, respectively. Although the talks contained fantastic information and the possibility of winning prizes, they were unfortunately quite poorly attended. Some factors that may have contributed to this include:

- Talks were held from 6-7pm which falls within dinner time for many students
- 2 of the talks took place within the welcoming period which made it quite difficult for busy HC members to really promote the event and encourage student attendance.
- Lack of visibility in terms of only advertising via Instagram as social media.

Running with the talks was a giveaway competition that involved giving away 6 copies of South Africans' current favourite financial education books. Our social media page also tried to create financial education posts throughout the month.

We are currently still in conversation with the FSCA about future plans for more talks and perhaps some more sustainable non-temporary solutions.

2. **Contact banks for information around loans and funding and student account options** - Goal 2 was connected to the financial wellness talks. I felt this was redundant because this portfolio is no longer primarily focused on student financial aid – that role is now specifically focused on by the Student Financial Access Portfolio.
3. **Begin meetings about food security initiative** – In February I attended a meeting with Ms Gina Sibanda (our Student Financial Access SRC member) and Lizzie Witbooi (SU Campus social worker) and we discussed the current food security options and protocols for students at the university. At this meeting we learned that a number of residences and PSO's operate a small food security initiatives within their residences and that the CSCD in collaboration with the Move4Food campaign were the main funders of food insecurity programs at the institution. Through our engagement in that meeting, it was decided that we would try to assist the small house-funded projects and allow the CSCD's protocols to handle other concerns. Although I am not personally involved with it, the SRC's Matie-to-Matie program has also been quite involved in handling non-food bases, but social insecurity focused requests for students. The initiative has played a major role in bridging the gap that food security programs can't directly help fill.
4. **Set up student interest groups (at least 3)** – This goal was unfortunately not targeted due to the rather dense workload of the term, but also the rather difficult situation that Covid has created (i.e. it is tough to create a special interest group that could potentially never meet

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in real life due to the pandemic). I also felt that there were more serious issues plaguing the student body that this was not an essential to accomplish.

5. **Have a successful physical wellness month** – Physical wellness month, although held online, was objectively a success. The initial plan drawn up last year was to have a series of 3 talks (A fatphobia talk, a sex talk and one more), however with the restrictions on live events, I felt that organising such talks online – especially the sex talk – may feel very impersonal and uncomfortable for many students. It was for this reason that I decided to work with my committee to create many infographics that could be released on our Instagram page about various topics. We also collaborated with Mr Khwezi Ndlovu (the SRC sport manager) who helped create the program with us and get some exercise routines for students to utilise during Test week to keep active. During this month, I saw major growth in terms of engagement with our Instagram page. We managed to surpass an average of 20 likes per post (a 5-7 like growth from Financial Wellness month) during April. This was really fantastic to see. We had another giveaway this month where we offered R250 Takealot vouchers to 5 students who showed off reaching 10 000 steps or showed off a good fitness pose.

A big event plan that was meant to happen in this term is the Indigenous Games Day. This was unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic, however it is still on the table to happen later in the year, in collaboration with Maties Sport and Tygermaties Cluster.

6. **Establish a student wellness committee** – This goal (a recommendation in the last report) was finally completed. In March I was able to establish a group of almost 30 students who were passionate about student wellness and wellbeing and created my sub-committee. The committee has been broken up into groups based on the month of the year and that particular theme. The members of the group were allowed to sign up for a theme(s) that they would like to organise events for. When a particular month comes about, the small group will get together to organise all sorts of things, like the topics for info-graphics, colour scheme etc. There is also a vice-chairperson and 3 rotating secretaries. Due to the fact that I am a Tygerberg campus student as well as the fact that such a large group makes meeting in-person difficult due to social distancing protocols and finding an adequate space, I have yet to meet some of the members in my community in person as of yet. An informal meet-and-greet session is currently being organised.

#### **Portfolio work done outside of these 2020-set goals**

- A. **Wellness Wednesdays** – In March I made contact with a privately practicing black female psychologist, Dr Thembelihle Dube, based in century city about having a mental health talk focused on POC issues around mental health. Dr Dube encouraged the idea of having consistent talks once a month in the form of an Instagram Live discussion. Thus began Wellness Wednesdays. This series started on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. Although the first talk did not render

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so much support, the conversation was very engaging and many students who attended benefitted from the session. The next session is planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2021.

- B. Planning has now begun for another financial wellness talk which will be in direct collaboration with Dagbreek and Sonop residences. The idea of pairing up with a house directly is to hopefully find a way to increase student turnout through them taking ownership of the event as it is being held within their residences.
- C. Discussions with the CSCD around mental health event planning for the year. Many of the discussions held with the CSCD have proved to be quite fruitful and have yielded a lot of information and advice that will be of great use to students.

### Term 3

#### Original Term 3 goals

1. Mental wellness month
2. Have 2 wellness Wednesdays talks
3. Host inter-cluster quiz
4. Grow our social media following
5. Host financial wellness talk

#### Feedback on these goals

1. **Mental wellness month** – Mental Wellness Month(s) was undoubtedly the most successful virtual wellness period that we have had this year. We utilised June and July to put out the necessary information and infographics, however much of May was used to plan for this month and ensure that it all ran smoothly. In May I sat with my committee (virtually) and we created an online posting schedule that would both allow our comm members to focus on their academics but also allow them enough time to create good quality infographics. Our primary focus was to release necessary information in the online space because the university's events policy would not allow us to host any sort of event, even those hosted with appropriate COVID-19 prevention protocols.

Some of the infographics we released on our Instagram page include topics such as:

- “Join a group session” - An infographic containing all of the sessions the CSCD was hosting for the rest of the year. This was important as the CSCD often hosts all kinds of amazing sessions on common student issue however not many students know about them.
- “What is the CSCD and how do you contact them?” – this was very well received as it also included a template email for students who were not sure what they should say in the emails they send to the CSCD.
- “Breathing techniques”
- “Effective study break ideas”

These are just a few of the types of graphics we released. We also received great interaction with these post with most infographics being shared by residences and our posts this month receiving an average of over 30 likes.

2. **Wellness Wednesdays** – I hosted 2 Wellness Wednesday sessions with Dr Thembelihle Dube within this term. The sessions were held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and the 14<sup>th</sup> of July. The first session Dr Dube and I discussed the topic of self-care and how to practically implement it in

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one's life. In the second session if the term we discussed the topic of the topic of apologies and forgiveness. The sessions are still not being so well attended by students at the time of their occurrence, however the videos do receive some good engagement in the few weeks after the posting of the recordings.

3. **Inter-Cluster quiz** – this event was unfortunately not able to proceed due the changes made by the President to the national lockdown levels. These changes, coupled with the move to online assessments and the already peaking COVID-19 numbers in Stellenbosch meant that any form of face-to-face engagement would not only be against the rules, it would also place many students in danger of contracting COVID-19.
4. **Grow our social media following** - this term, through our consistent engagement within mental Wellness month our Instagram page saw a steep increase in followers and interactions. Within this term we gained over 30 new followers and bringing our total to 300 plus followers at the time of writing this report our goal for the fourth term is to surpass 350 followers. Having such a following would not just be of benefit to the portfolio but would also benefit my successor.
5. **Host financial wellness talk** - as stated in the previous report we began discussions with various residences as well as the FSCA to host a financial management talk within the third term. Due to the organization wanting the talk to be monitored and evaluated by an external organization we had to postpone the talk to the third term. The talk will now be taking place on the 18th of August at 6:00 PM.

#### **Other activities completed this term**

- A. **Anti-cyberbullying campaign** - the anti-cyberbullying campaign was organized and spearheaded by the Equality Unit, as a response to complaints of cyberbullying through confessions pages on social media. I was tasked with being the cohost of an Instagram live session with a qualified psychologist from the CSCD. In the discussion the psychologist and I discussed what cyberbullying looked like, the various consequences of cyberbullying, as well as the mental health impacts of such activities. This conversation was a lead-up to a much larger talk that would be hosted by a qualified legal professional who specializes in cyber-crime. This talk will take place in the third term. The IG live was relatively well attended with good student engagement, especially considering that it was hosted at lunchtime.
- B. **Internal SRC wellness** – within this term I also worked our Chair and Vice Chairperson to host a wellness event for the internal SRC group. The event was hosted as a means to rebuild team morale and provide peer support during a difficult time for our committee. The event was well received by those SRC members that were able to participate.

#### **Term 4**

The 4<sup>th</sup> term of SRC work was focused primarily around 4 major initiatives:

- 1) Internal SRC morale booster
- 2) Women's Month in collaboration with the SRC Transformation Portfolio
- 3) SRC Feedback Forum
- 4) Spiritual Wellness month

#### **Internal SRC morale booster**

As it was the final term of SRC work and the team had experienced a non-stop year, the SRC Executive approved the conduction of one last morale booster, at the beginning of the term, to discourage

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worker fatigue and encourage a strong finish by the team. Sadly, however, despite the necessary planning and arrangements starting 3 weeks prior to the date of the outing, the vision for the morale booster was not realised by the powers that be, due to the university's restriction on student events. Although the occurrence of residence events was still permitted during this period. As a result, there was a missed opportunity to boost SRC morale during their final term.

## **Women's Month**

The Women's Month collaboration with the Transformation portfolio has been the most successful collaboration of this portfolio this year. The month consisted of 4 initiatives:

- a) Words from Inspirational Women in our institution
- b) Women's Month activation on the Rooiplein
- c) Social Media campaign
- d) Women's Month roundtable discussion

### **A. Words from Inspirational Women in our institution**

Viwe and I reached out to about 9 women in our institution ranging from Deans to lecturers to Senior Management staff who we felt would be a great inspiration to the young women of our institution. We received video responses from only 3 of them: Dr Ronel Retief (Registrar of Stellenbosch University), Professor Karin Baatjes (From the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science) and Professor Ingrid Woolard (from the EMS Faculty). The videos were showed on the Student Wellness Instagram page.

### **B. Women's Month activation on the Rooiplein**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, we hosted booth on the Rooiplein from 11am-2pm. At this booth we gave away goodie bags filled with sweets, a Breast Cancer Awareness ribbon and a Women's Month Zine. I would like to say a very special thank you to Rewaldo Carolus, Philip Visage, Reuben and Luigia Nicolas who helped fold 300+ pamphlets, fill 300+ bags of sweets and then make the 300 packages. This made the work much lighter on Viwe and I and was absolutely critical in the success of our event, The reception of the booth and the giveaways was absolutely fantastic. We gave the goodie bags away to the women that we saw around and who came to the stall. I also handed out some goodie bags to the women waiting in line to get vaccinated as it was the first day that the Pharmacy at the Neelsie was conducting vaccinations for those 18+ in age. Many of the women were very excited about receiving the goodie bags, one staff member even said "Now I know this is going to be a great day." The activation was also one of the only in-person events that we were able to have, and although it was a lot of work arranging all the necessary details with the facilities management team, it was all worth it in the end.

### **C. Social Media Campaign**

Our social media campaign worked along with the posting of the videos for women's month. We released information on The History of Women's Month, The Power of Positive Affirmations, Breast Cancer and Self-examination information and a few others. These were also well received by the students that engaged with them.

### **D. Women's Month Roundtable Discussion**

The Women's Month Roundtable discussion was originally set to be filmed at a restaurant in Stellenbosch with a few women student leaders (both positional and non-positional) who we felt had been influential within their contexts. Due to the university's covid-19 restrictions, however, we had to move the discussion to the MS Teams platform. Overall, the discussion lasted 2 hours which was then edited over 3 days (by Makabongwe Kaseke) and released on the SRC Transformation's Instagram page in the form of 15 minute IGTV.

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## **SRC Feedback Forum**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August we held the first ever SRC feedback forum via MS Teams. My role as the host and coordinator of the forum was to create a unified powerpoint presentation comprised of information submitted by the various portfolio holders. I also created the related posters, schedule and in-between entertainment for attendees. The forum was not well attended – a similar trend can be seen at the TSR feedback forums – however many of the members enjoyed having the platform to discuss their plans and what they had achieved during their term in office and have that be celebrated and appreciated by other team members and students. A recommendation going forward would be to have these forums once a term. Because it was the first forum ever, we had to squash the whole year's activities into one session, however if it is done once a term then students have a greater chance to have input in the happenings of the SRC and they also get to give feedback that will hopefully improve SRC functioning.

## **Spiritual Wellness Month**

This is the last month of the SRC term and I therefore hoped to focus on doing lighter work and dedicating more time to focusing on my handover and other consuming projects. I communicated with the TSR's Wellness representative (Queren) who gave her permission for me to repost the infographics that she had made for spiritual wellness. I found that the information I had hoped to share was already contained in her infographics and therefore I felt no need to duplicate the work when it could simply be shared on a different profile while giving credit to the original creator..

## **Other term events**

### **Student Wellness Committee End-of-year function**

Due covid-19 restrictions on student events, I will be purchasing merchandise for my committee members with the money that was originally budgeted to be spent on their dinner.

### **Wellness Wednesdays**

Within this term, Dr Dube and I have already hosted a Wellness Wednesday discussion and we are hosting the final session on Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. The last session will be hosted with Viwe Kobokana and will focus on Imposter Syndrome. Post-session feedback: The session was very well attended with over 90 people engaging with the Live (way more than usual) – I hope that this work continues in the next SRC's term.

### **Financial Wellness Talk**

Due to some unforeseen complications with the FSCA team in Johannesburg, we had to cancel the talk. Both the Dagbreek and Sonop representatives have stated that they will encourage their successors to collaborate with the SRC again to hopefully host such an event in the new leadership term.

## **Budget**

### **Budget & Reasoning**

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	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent	Amount available
<b>Student Wellness</b>			<b>R26 817,69</b>
<u>Discretionary Funds- Student Wellness</u>			<u>R500,00</u>
Discretionary Funds	R1 000,00	R500,00	R500,00
<u>Financial Wellness talk Series</u>			<u>R600,00</u>
Give-away Books	R1 376,00	R1 376,00	R0,00
Refreshments: Water	R0,00		R0,00
Gifts for Speakers	R600,00		R600,00
<u>Member Expenses</u>			<u>R8 174,04</u>
Student Wellness Committee Meetings	R2 400,00	R2 029,25	R370,75
Emergency Meetings	R1 200,00		R1 200,00
Executive Committee Meetings	R9 600,00	R6 396,71	R3 203,29
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent	Amount available
Rectorate Management Meetings	R400,00		R400,00
Saldanha	R1 800,00		R1 800,00
Senate Meetings	R1 200,00		R1 200,00
<u>Mental Health Month</u>			<u>R1 200,00</u>
Gifts for Speakers	R1 200,00		R1 200,00
Book Giveaways	R1 475,00	R1 475,00	R0,00
<u>Physical Wellness talk Series</u>			<u>R0,00</u>
Gifts	R1 250,00	R1 250,00	R0,00
<u>Pop-up Coffee Shop (Social Wellness)</u>			<u>R1 500,00</u>
Rooibos tea bags	R200,00		R200,00
Containers for supplies	R100,00		R100,00
Coffee	R200,00		R200,00
Biscuits	R500,00		R500,00
Styrofoam cups	R300,00		R300,00
Sugar 2.5kg	R50,00		R50,00
Plastic teaspoons	R150,00		R150,00
<u>SRC Wellness initiative</u>			<u>R6 535,00</u>
Wellness function	R5 035,00	R500,00	R4 535,00
Transport	R2 000,00		R2 000,00
<u>Student Wellness End-of-year Function</u>			<u>R1 766,35</u>
Committee Gifts	R3 500,00	R3 447,94	R52,06
Dinner & Drinks	R2 700,00	R985,71	R1 714,29
<u>Women's Month</u>			<u>R6 542,30</u>
Different Projects	R10 000,00	R3 457,70	R6 542,30

## Expenditure so far

Expenditure from the portfolio's budget so far can be seen in the image above which is an excerpt of Philip Visage's Treasurer report.

Two costs not included in the above report as of yet, are the cost of Gifts for Speaker from both the Mental Wellness budget and the Financial Wellness budget. As those sessions had multiple sessions conducted by the same speakers, the cost of the gift will be bulked up to purchase one package for delivery to those speakers.

## Recommendations to improve portfolio

Creating a good committee is fundamental. Oftentimes, less is more and possibly better -i.e. curating a good team through interview processes and such is key.

Collaborating with both residences and PSOs is a great way to improve reach and visibility and may allow for greater engagement at SRC-hosted events.

The Mental Health Policy was unexpectedly rejected by the Rectorate. It is important for the next portfolio holder, and the next SRC to advocate for this policy over the coming years.

## Important Contacts

- Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Head of the CSCD)– [mdunn@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdunn@sun.ac.za)
- Mev Elmarie Kruger – [elmarievdw@sun.ac.za](mailto:elmarievdw@sun.ac.za)
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- Lyndwill Clarke – Financial Sector Conduct Authority’s Consumer Education division chairperson – [Lyndwill.Clarke@fsca.co.za](mailto:Lyndwill.Clarke@fsca.co.za)
- Grace Phoshoko – Financial Sector Conduct Authority – [Grace.phoshoko@fsca.co.za](mailto:Grace.phoshoko@fsca.co.za)
- Dr Thembelihle Dube – Clinical Psychologist for Wellness Wednesdays – [td@thembelihledube.com](mailto:td@thembelihledube.com)
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