General Council Meeting Agenda
September 11, 5:30 PM in 32-155

1. Introduction, Dinner, New Faces (5:35 – 5:40 PM)
   a. Introductions
      i. Several new faces (~10) + introductions
   b. Quorum Check
      i. Using clickers: 45 people
      ii. Quorum reached.
   c. Approval of August GCM Minutes
      i. Motion to approve and seconded; approved

2. Issues and Priorities for the Year (5:40 – 5:50 PM)
   a. Presented by Peter Su
      i. This is going to be different from other GCM’s: our goal is to outline our priorities and present the subcommittees and recruit
      ii. There are several issues that we are working on right now; the committees are probably going to say the same stuff
      iii. Advising
         1. As context, there have been a lot of efforts across the schools and departments that are coming together
         2. We are adding ourselves to that mix through our ARC advising committee
         3. They are putting together a survey that might help inform good advising practices. E.g. regarding advising styles
         4. There is now a chancellor’s and provost’s committee on advising
         5. The chair of the advising committee and Peter are on that committee.
         6. There are a lot more things than that survey that the GSC is working on.
      iv. Student wellbeing and support
         1. As context, there are a lot of resources at MIT for support and wellbeing. Also there is a big barrier to getting help, so there are reasons why students might not reach out to those resources.
2. We have a new HCA subcommittee (wellness) – working on new events; will be the center of advocacy efforts.

3. Center for REFS program (a good peer-to-peer support resource)

v. “Lower tail” of stipends: financial distress

1. There are some students (not a miniscule fraction) who receive less than our HCA stipend recommendation team’s “livable stipend” level. As part of this year’s stipend increase (letter sent out in April), all schools have committed to new policies for 9-month-stipend students and non-resident status students.

2. The commitment is there and it’s going to happen.

3. The stipend recommendation committee is looking at many different types of graduate students and situations.

vi. Family-related efforts

1. A fraction of students have families and thus higher costs.

2. If you have a significant other, it can be tough.

3. What’s happening right now is that the Graduate Families Working Group (started mid-last academic year) that is highlighting data re. who has families (there is no existing database); giving MIT a central person/staff/office that a person with a family can contact to find resources. Also MIT will be exploring new ways to financially support students with families.

vii. Housing

1. We’ve been working on this for several years. A couple years ago we secured 950 new campus beds.

2. We are trying to advocate changes in the housing lottery and housing process. For example, students now have the ability to renew license for a second year.

3. This is particularly important for master’s students, who stay for two years.

4. Another recent change: you can enter housing lottery with roommates as a group; rather than applying separately and then requesting to become roommates.
5. The next step is the self-selection system: you get to self-select a room (rather than a room type), so you have better information about the room, the size of it, the location, etc; Makes it a lot more like a private market, it’s a lot like visiting different apartments within a dorm, first-come-first-serve.

6. We also secured an annual review process of the state of graduate housing, so that it stays on the administration’s agenda. (Grad Housing Working Group)

viii. Professional development

1. CAPD a few years ago were highly undergrad-focused; there wasn’t that much grad-specific stuff.
2. We are slowly re-aligning MIT’s priorities to focus on undergrads.
3. Some students had problems obtaining Optional Practical Training (OPT) for their internships; thus, faculty are trying to put together experiential learning curricula for their departments (CPT, which is approved by MIT, not the government).
4. New alumni engagement subcommittee, to help engage alumni and get advice/career help for grad students.

ix. Those are the major issues that the GSC is currently thinking about. Any questions on broader stuff?

1. No questions.

3. Opportunities to Get Involved (5:50 – 5:55 PM)

a. Presented by Alex Joerger

i. 3 ways: D-Refs, GSC committees, Institute Representative

ii. Your dorms count as “departments”. D-Refs are a crucial part of the general council, and you guys should report to us what is important to graduate students. There are 20-30 departments with open positions, so if you are interested, let us know. You can go through the website, or through your department. Go to the website (under Representatives > list of council representatives, check if your department has a council representative). You can also reach out to gsc@mit.edu or gsc-vp@mit.edu.
iii. Committees: All the work in the GSC happens in the committees. If you have any questions or want to join, email gsc@mit.edu.

iv. Institute Committees: MIT-run committees; if you want to have an impact on policy and have your student voice heard, go to the website. Open positions are ISEO search committee and Eastgate transition working group; the deadline is this Friday. Approach Alex after GCM or email Alex at gsc-vp@mit.edu if you are interested.

1. Eastgate is coming down, new beds are coming to Site 4.
2. MIT wants to make sure that financial needs are addressed (new site will be expensive), and that the transition is smooth. Will be open to single students as well.
3. ISEO: Provost is trying to find and hire new institute equity officer, and is looking for help with the search.

b. Any questions? (No questions)

4. Funding Opportunities (5:55 – 6:05 PM)

a. GSC has money that we give back to students!

b. Presented by Robin Lindemann

i. One of the biggest things for individual people: if you want to travel to a conference, we have a $65k/year budget from which you can request $1k/year for travel fees. We look at need, academic performance, and professionalism

ii. We have APAG – subsidize travel etc. for athletics/performance

iii. Professional development grant – not exactly like travel grant; we give up to $200 towards registration fee for events not related to your research conferences.

iv. To the ASA, we give $ for events run by grad-student-funded clubs. Up to $2000/group per quarter.

v. Other funds:

1. Sustainability fund ($7000 allocation) – funds initiatives that educate or support sustainability on campus. Individuals or groups are eligible.

2. Public service grants (through PKG office). Groups could apply up to $400 per group per quarter. Subsidizes off-campus events that help form community.
a. This year, we want to open it up to department groups rather than just ASA-recognized groups.

3. Diversity community fund
   a. Funds events that are oriented towards diversity and creating dialogue about diversity-related topics. Funding of up to $150/event. (Pilot for this year; run by DEI).

4. Initiatives fund
   a. Fund that we use to finance anything that we think would be especially valuable to the community that doesn’t fall under those categories (e.g. art installations, various types of events). Executive committee votes on an initiative, then it gets passed to general council.

c. Council rep funding
   i. You can get $ from the GSC for events. Each council rep can get up to $250 to run an event ($150 for being on council, additional $100 for being active in a committee or institute committee). You can also get an additional $150 if you join forces with another council rep.
   ii. Some conditions: Can’t pay for alcohol; money can be used towards food though. All information is on website, under Council Rep Funding. Examples of successful events: MEGA Muddy Monday, garden party at 70 Amherst, coffee hours, etc.
   iii. Reach out to gsc-vp@mit.edu with any questions, also feel free to check out the website if you are looking for ideas. I have a list of old events. The $ is there so that you use it; use it or lose it.

d. Any questions? (None)

5. GSC Committee Priorities and Opportunities (6:05 – 7:25 PM)
   a. ARC (Presented by Meicen and Sylvia)
      i. As the name suggests, we are a “work” committee (though we have fun too!); we try to meet the academic/career demands of the Grad community regardless of their career direction. We can point people to resources, for example; facilitate communication, provide resources, etc.
      ii. Flagship events: academic job search panel (coming up Tuesday, Sept 24th), popular Postdoc search panel, Roads to Academia...
(discussion/talk series involving professors in an intimate “fireside chat” setting about how they got into academia), Thesis Lounge (formerly Destressing Your Dissertation), Profs on Tap and Alums on Tap (small group discussion; professors, professionals, and alums; talk over food and drinks about things not necessarily related to research or work).

iii. Four subcommittees

1. Advising Initiative (new this summer; having biweekly meetings); trying to identify existing issues between students and advisers and looking for solutions. Had productive discussions with chancellor’s office.
2. Alumni Relations committee (aims at strengthening relationship b/w grad students and alumni); do networking and connecting with alums
3. Travel Grant subcommittee (decides how to allocate the travel grant based on research merit, need, and past conference attendance)
4. Visiting student association (VISTA) – provides a home for visiting students who stay for a short time and are international.

iv. Two grants

1. Travel Grant
2. Professional Development Grant (directly managed by Sylvia and Meicen) - $200/person to attend professional development events.

v. List of very needed up and coming events that we are hosting

1. Academic Job Panel (Wong Auditorium) – recent recipients of institute advising awards.
2. Alum on Tap coming up – email us if interested, since signup is required. (Same day, same time as academic job panel)
3. VISTA orientation (cultural night) at Lobdell. Happening this Friday at 6pm
4. GSC Networking Events with employers: sponsored by Alumni Relations subcommittee. On Friday, Sept 20, they’ll have the event at Lobdell.

vi. How can I get involved?
1. Easiest thing to do – come to our next meeting at 50-220 next Thursday from 6-7pm. We'll be giving an overview of our work and how we plan to do work better next year.

2. Stay connected virtually – join mailing list (gsc-arc-members@mit.edu) or write to us at gsc-arc@mit.edu and we'll add you to our list.

b. AC (Presented by Henry and Ruoxuan)
   i. What is AC?
      1. We are the “cool guys” of the GSC
      2. We organize fun events for the grad student community, just to come together and have fun. We want to help grad students know that there are events happening outside lab.
   ii. If you want to be a part of GSC, consider helping out at events, and if you have ideas for events, let us know. If you help out, you get free tickets to events as well!
   iii. Some events we host:
      1. Taste of series
         a. 7 total per year (once a month). Big showcase, open to all grad students, including families and spouses. Lots of food!
         b. There will be a September one (coming Tuesday, in Morss Hall from 6-8pm. Bring your container to skip the line!). October one is still up in the air – if you know any cultural groups who would like to participate, let us know at gsc-ac@mit.edu.
         c. If you want to help out, come at 5pm!
         d. Previously: Taste of Colombia, lots of people, with performances. Taste of Lebanon, with dance performance. Taste of Belgium, with painting.
      2. Monthly GSC coffee hour at Stata Café. We have free boba too!
      3. We have MIT's only Black-Tie event, Grad Gala
         a. Open to all grad students, takes place in Spring
         b. You have to dress up. It’s fancy and there’s good food and drinks.
Two academic years ago, we did Museum of Science. Last year, a cruise.

Next one will be at Westin Copley place, on Sunday April 4. Ticket sales projected to begin Jan 1 2020. Stay tuned!

Outdoor activities: GSC Ski Trip (good way to spend IAP), get ~300 people each year, free lessons as well. Next ski trip is Jan 24 at Jay Peak in Vermont, tickets are $300. Whale watching trip happens every summer (already happened). Six Flags trip (already happened). Apple picking (next one goes on sale next week).

Visual arts.

a. 4 paint nights per year. Last year’s sponsors included GSC, IS&T, ISO, and Community Wellness. You don’t have to follow the guide, so you can be creative! The paint night made Mind, Hand, Heart (MHH) news.

b. Art Gallery tour at the end of the first semester. Go to Institute for Contemporary Art.

c. Arts Gallery showcase in spring; if you are an artist or a photographer or make some hand crafts, you have an opportunity to showcase your work, with free food and drinks.

Musical performances

a. Battle of the Bands annual showcase every year. Next one is March 6, 2020.

b. Acoustic BBQ at end of semester is a good way to meet people.

iv. Ultimately, we’re just grad students who like to have fun.

v. If you have ideas, let us know! Gsc-ac@mit.edu. If you are interested in helping out, come to our committee meeting; our next one is Monday the 23rd at 6pm at the GSC office, there’s free food!

vi. Any questions? (None)

c. ASA (presented by Becca Black)

i. Is “sort of” a GSC committee: a joint committee between undergrad association and GSC.
Question I get a lot from student groups and non-student groups: what is the ASA?

1. We are a group that is primarily geared to advocate for the 450 student groups on campus. We are the main representative between them and administration. We deal with day-to-day logistics, etc.
2. If you are interested in getting involved, let us know.

We have funding through LEF/ARCADE.

1. $50-80k allocated per quarter
2. 20-50 events funded by LEF/ARCADE each cycle

We recognize and de-recognize student groups, assist with constitutional and operational planning for new groups, advocate for and consult with students during conflicts with ASA and SAO policies

Hub for resources to help planning.

Main conduit between student groups and the SAO (i.e. the administrative oversight for groups on campus)

Looking over how space is used on campus

1. Give groups space to work with. ASA distributes that space on campus and ensures that space is being used well.
2. This year, we want to make a space-use policy to make sure that space is being utilized well.

ASA is a good way to get involved on campus.

Big-picture goals

1. Outdated operating guidelines are being redesigned; we are looking at what policies we want to have in place.
2. Trying to make a guide for new groups, since it’s really confusing to be a student group on campus. Want to help student groups operate in that way.

If you’re interested in helping out, send us an email at asa-exec@mit.edu. We are looking at ~Wednesday afternoons at the GSC office. Visit our website if you want to know more about us at asa.mit.edu.

Any questions? (None)
i. This is the first year we’re running DEI as a full GSC committee, so there are a lot of ways to shape how the committee is run.

ii. We want to amplify the voices of and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups at MIT.

iii. Want to promote engagement and community building around these groups.

iv. Hold MIT administration accountable for success, degree completion, etc. of underrepresented groups.

v. Two subcommittees

1. Department and Classroom Inclusion: Focuses on academic and department level. Conduits are representatives who work on DEI issues within their department.

2. Student Life: Focuses on DEI initiatives within identity groups on campus. Have constituency representatives from GWAMIT, undergrad minority C-Rep, etc.

vi. Because we’re new, we have lots of opportunities to get involved. For DCI subcommittee, we are looking for conduits who can summarize and convey the current situation in their department. We want all departments to implement DEI initiatives, and establish best practices for each department. Must attend conduit assemblies this year (3 total this year). First on is October 1.

vii. You can become a co-coordinator of the committee. Currently, there are 3 students involved.

viii. This year, we are having a community fund where if you wanted to have an event or activity within your department that is diversity focused, we can help.

ix. We have 2 graduate community fellows who are working on surveys and data analysis. Departments usually survey their students, and we partnered with institutional research (IR) to make the surveys a sustainable practice. Then, we want to run surveys in departments but through IR. One of our fellows will be leaving after 1st semester, so this position will open up in Spring.
x. Student Life subcommittee is not well-structured right now, so we are looking for feedback. We are also looking for religious life and international student representatives.

xi. Some broad initiatives
   1. Helped create best practices for application and assistance programs.
   2. Additionally, the first year graduate students have to do a diversity training module, and we’re hoping to have intergroup dialogue events re. the DEI module.

xii. Ongoing search for the Institute Community Equity Office (ICEO) – looking for strategic insights

xiii. Informal BBQ coming up.

xiv. Meetings on the 26th at 5pm.

xv. If you are interested, email gsc-diversity@mit.edu

xvi. Any questions? (None)

e. External Affairs Board (Presented by Jack Reid)
   i. Handles advocacy, public outreach, and education for the GSC
   ii. Includes here locally at Cambridge, as well as the state and federal level.
   iii. Next meeting is a week from today.
   iv. Subcommittees
      1. Compared to other GSC committees, we have more of a hierarchy that focuses on specific areas.
      2. Federal affairs deals with federal policy; we issue statements, white papers, try writing legislation; send students on 2-3 trips to D.C. each year to talk with congress. E.g. talking about visa issues, sexual harassment in the sciences (pressuring congress to act on recommendations), student hunger (join letter with CMU on the topic), advising and mentorship at MIT (looking to make a priority at federal level)
      3. State and Local meeting next week. Very similar to Federal Affairs, but focused at State level. We send 3-5 students, and you don’t need to be an active member of the board to participate. If you’re interested in going on one of those, reach out to Jack (gsc-eab@mit.edu)
a. You can easily visit the MA statehouse, so we can send as many people as interested to those
b. Regular meetings with city council, working with MITVote on Cambridge City Council elections
c. Looking at noncitizen voting, bike lanes (redoing Mass Ave Vassar intersection), carbon pricing and climate change activities (more tractable at State level than federal level currently), regular sexual misconduct surveys for colleges

4. Public Outreach
a. Not about MIT research, but more about humanizing graduate students and breaking down barriers between ivory tower and the public.
b. Activities are on or near campus, e.g. Astrogazers (set up telescopes for stargazing), Trivia Night, 3 minute thesis competition, MIT open space programming advisory committee, SHINE (student hometown interviews in newspapers – help students get a bipic in their local newspapers back home), SHIP grant (help provide some $ towards giving a presentation about your research or life at MIT, etc. at local elementary school or high school)

5. University Liaison
a. Open position – let us know if interested. We do lots of collaboration with other universities, especially with NAGPS (national association of graduate & professional students). We are hosting the Northeast regional conference this Spring. Also Ivy+ summit (student and deans conferences are separate); they do information sharing on successes/difficulties/problems that grad student governments have faced. Reach out to gsc-eab@mit.edu if interested.
b. Started working recently to have more contact with local grad student governments.

v. First meeting is beginning of October
vi. Any questions? (None)

f. Housing & Community Affairs (presented by Mohammad)
   i. “Catch-all committee” of GSC because a lot of things are “community affairs”.
   ii. Focus on community issues and services that affect entire grad student community.
   iii. Lots of different projects – try to foster inter-dorm relationships, off-campus events, affordability (stipend recommendations), safety (e.g. transportation, bikeability, roads, crosswalks), having support resources in place at MIT

iv. Structure (subcommittees)
   1. Sustainability
      a. Focused on implementing sustainable practices on campus
      b. Creating modules that grad students can take and understand how to be sustainable
      c. Oversee sustainability fund (which Robin talked about earlier)
   2. Transportation
      a. Annual bike safety event (happened on Monday)
      b. Help promote the ease of getting around on campus
   3. Off-campus
      a. 3 events per month
   4. Family
      a. Advocates for needs of grad student families. We don’t currently have family subcommittee chairs.
   5. iREFS and Wellness
      a. Newly formed subcommittee with 3 goals: organize events and workshops, remind grad students to take care of themselves, act as center of GSC efforts to improve grad student wellness
      b. iREFS are within Wellness subcommittee; they are trained in conflict management. You can schedule a meeting with the iREFS, who can chat with you.

6. Dorms
Graduate Student Council
of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1. Make MIT a home for everyone, make sure everyone is comfortable and thriving
2. Making sure that there is communication between housing office and grad dorms
   a. Improve the housing system as much as possible and improve communication.
   b. Monthly meetings focused on getting grad dorms to talk to each other.
3. Promote grad student wellness
4. Help families. First thing to work on this year is to get a chair for the Families subcommittee.
5. Things to do soon
   a. Ensuring the Eastgate transition will be as smooth as possible.
   b. Stipend recommendation (we look at cost of living data based on triannual survey). We’d like to go beyond the average student and look at different groups of people, e.g. international students and families. Trying to do a more holistic view, start that later this semester. Want to get some family input on this project as well.
6. If you’re interested in building community and making MIT a green place, improving safety, wellness, preventing financial distress, etc., let us know! Come join us; our next meeting is September 26, 6-7:30pm at GSC office. First Wellness subcommittee meeting is on the 19th. You can also contact us at gsc-hca@mit.edu if you are generally interested in helping out.
7. Any questions? (None)

Muddy Charles Pub (Presented by Richard)

i. Run by students, for students; non-profit. Lots of startups are founded in this pub! A long time ago, the beer was free.
ii. Today, I want to recruit you guys to help run the pub.
iii. MIT has a lot of different groups, e.g. the GSC, the Muddy, the Grad Students, the MIT administration. We are the largest board in the GSC with 7 students and 7 alumni, people hang around for a long time. People are very interested in the health and longevity of the pub. We plan activities, manage the pub’s
money. Have you ever wondered how much the Muddy makes? (I can’t tell you but if you join I can tell you.)

iv. Most recently, we have established a fundraising team to help raise $ from outside donors.

v. If you’re on this board, you’re basically a faculty member, since you have to write grants and work with graduate students.

vi. What have we done?

1. Jazz brunch – live band, was on a Saturday, with Mimosas, students enjoyed it
2. Radio thing with WMBR (undergrad radio station).
3. Go to sailing pavilion and have beer there, sometimes we have casks inside the bar.

vii. Want to replace tables and chairs, will probably happen in the next year or so.

viii. “Knowledge is the path from slavery to freedom”

ix. Next board meeting is on October 21st at 7pm on 2nd floor of Walker.

x. There was meant to be a post-GCM social, but there was an electrical fire. We’ll see what happens.

xi. Muddy has non-alcoholic drinks as well.

h. Orientation Committee (Somesh)

i. We welcome the entire grad student body to campus.

ii. Three distinct event types: pre-campus programs, orientation week, and Resources 101 series.

iii. Summer sendoff events were organized by local MIT alumni chapters. It was an informal welcome, and provided a networking opportunity for students.

iv. Webinars introduced life at MIT in a virtual way, for domestic students, international students, and students with families.

v. Wanted to communicate what MIT is all about to students, including bulletins, emails, etc. with open rates as high as 70%.

vi. Working on different aspects like shooting videos, taking photographs, working with departments/centers across campus.

vii. New initiatives

1. Mini-golf across campus
2. Campus-wide scavenger hunt (attended by 200-ish students)
3. Beach trip
4. Resources 101

viii. If you want to join OC, you are certainly welcome
ix. We are sending out an institute-wide survey to students to get input.
x. Opportunity: paid position for a webmaster, designer/video recorder.
xi. We’d love to hear from you; email gsc-oc@mit.edu.

6. Open Floor (7:25 – 7:30 PM)
   a. If anyone wants to bring up any general items, let me know.
   b. Any motions to adjourn? Seconded and approved.

7. Post-GCM Social @ the Muddy
### Upcoming GSC Meetings

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<tr>
<th>Academic, Research, and Careers (ARC)</th>
<th>Thursday, 9/19, 6:00 PM</th>
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<td>Visiting Students Association (VISTA)</td>
<td>Every Monday, 7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities Committee (AC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Affairs Board (EAB)</td>
<td>Wednesday, 9/18, 5:00 PM</td>
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<td>Federal Affairs Subcommittee</td>
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<td>State and Local Affairs Subcommittee</td>
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<td>Public Outreach Subcommittee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Subcommittee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Community Affairs (HCA)</td>
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<td>Off-campus Subcommittee</td>
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<td>Sustainability Subcommittee</td>
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<td>Transportation Subcommittee</td>
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<td>Wellness Subcommittee</td>
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<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)</td>
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<td>Muddy Charles Pub</td>
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<td>Orientation Committee (OC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Committee (ExComm)</td>
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*Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are in the GSC Office (50-220)

### Upcoming General Council Meetings (GCMs)

Note: Dinner starts at 5:00 PM and meetings start at 5:30 PM

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<th>October General Council Meeting</th>
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<td>November General Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>December General Council Meeting</td>
<td>Wednesday, 12/4, 32-155</td>
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