Welcome to the 4th edition of our departmental newsletter. It is a pleasure again to share with you the news and exciting developments that have taken place in the past year.

I would like to start off by recognizing some important milestones for our faculty. Kristen Corbosiero and Jiping Liu both obtained tenure and were promoted to Associate Professor. In addition, Aiguo Dai and Mathias Vuille were both promoted to Full Professor. As you will see in this newsletter Aiguo was also made a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society and Mathias obtained a prestigious NSF Partnership for International Research and Education (PIRE) award to collaborate with colleagues in the U.S., Brazil and Argentina.

I would be remiss not to also celebrate here that Ross Lazear finished in first place this academic year among all faculty/staff weather forecasters in the “WxChallenge”—the North American collegiate weather forecasting competition. This is a major achievement. In addition, UAlbany participants took home eight city trophies, and PhD student Philippe Papin finished in second place among graduate student participants. UAlbany also sent seven forecasters to the WxChallenge tournament.

The department also achieved a significant milestone this year with respect to the Graduate Program. We welcomed 19 new students for the Fall 2017 semester. As a consequence, we had a total of 82 graduate students (that includes students advised by ASRC scientists), making it the largest atmospheric science graduate program in the United States by enrollment. The incoming class hailed from 9 different states, and 4 different countries.

I should let you know that progress continues on plans for the new building. We again had numerous meetings this year and I am happy to announce that the building design is completed and there has been some ground preparation over recent months. As you all probably know, this is going to be a game changer for us. It is a huge 4-story building. Joining us in the building will be ASRC, the Center of Excellence, the NYS Mesonet and other organizations. We expect that the building will be completed in the 2020/2021 timeframe. Hopefully in the next newsletter we will have some construction photos to share!

The coming two years will be interesting for DAES with a number of significant retirements expected. While saying good bye to well-loved colleagues is sad, it is also a time for new beginnings and opportunities. So look out for new hiring in DAES. It is an exciting time to be part of the continued development of the department and so if you are aware of interested talent please let us know.

As always – I have only covered a fraction of what is happening in DAES and so I hope you enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

Chris Thornicroft
Professor and Chair
Mathias Vuille believes the key to our future is a better understanding of how and why Earth’s climate has varied naturally over the past thousand years – long before humans made a significant impact.

Vuille is the principal investigator on a $4.997 million PIRE (Partnerships for International Research and Education) grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study climate variations over the last millennium in North and South America.

The project is a multi-institutional, international collaboration involving six institutions and 18 investigators from the United States, Brazil and Argentina.

“I have collaborated with my colleagues in South America for the past 20 years. But we were never able to have a joint program and always needed to try to align our research. This PIRE format is absolutely ideal for us,” Vuille said. “We believe that a better understanding of past climate variability is the key to the future. That is, a better understanding of past climate variations over North and South America will allow us to better constrain future climate projections by placing them within a broader historical context.”

The team is using the PIRE funding to merge data from the two largest tree-ring and cave sediment archives in South America. This will allow them to produce reconstructions of historical extreme weather events (monsoons, El Niño, etc.) over the two continents, analyze societal responses and better predict future events based on past model-archive comparisons.

Their findings will be translated into easy-to-use visualization tools through the Albany Visualization and Informatics Lab (AVAIL) at UAlbany.

In addition, the funding will allow students interested in STEM to be immersed in all research activities. This includes international online courses, campus presentations, semesters abroad, international summer schools, hands-on training and U.S.-based summer academies to broaden participation in STEM among minority and women students.

The team is also hosting two international forums, led by UAlbany’s Center for International Development (CID), to better inform scientists, government officials, legislators, ministry staff, and other key stakeholders of the risks of climate change over the next century.

The project will run for five years from September 2017 to August 2022.

“This prestigious, highly competitive NSF PIRE award marks yet another historic milestone for UAlbany’s Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences,” said UAlbany President Havidán Rodríguez. “I want to extend my congratulations to Dr. Vuille for his scientific leadership and vision in making this award possible. Through this international research and education partnerships, Dr. Vuille and his team will better inform the scientific community and better prepare international stakeholders in reducing the worldwide risks associated with climate change over the next 100 years.”

“This highly prominent NSF PIRE award is just one more example of UAlbany’s internationally-recognized research strength in climate science,” said UAlbany Vice President for Research James Dias. “I congratulate Dr. Vuille – one of the world’s preeminent scholars on climate variability and predictability – for his leadership in bringing together this team of international researchers and thought leaders. Their work is poised to make significant gains in tackling one of the world’s most pressing scientific and societal challenges – climate change.”

“Our team certainly hopes to advance the understanding of past climate variability,” Vuille said. “We also want to contribute in training the next generation of motivated, globally competent, environmental scientists. Climate change is arguably the biggest challenge of our lifetime and we must train the next generation who can tackle the...
challenges that lie ahead. Otherwise, we will be remembered as the scientists that provided all the evidence of human interference in the climate system, but failed to act on it.”

Other institutions involved with the project include the University of Sao Paulo, the University Federal Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro, the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, the SUNY System Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and the Argentinian Institute for Snow, Glacier and Environmental Research (IANIGLA).

**Professor Aiguo Dai named 2018 Fellow of the American Meteorological Society (AMS)**

One of America’s leading researchers into climate and global change will be joining the premier fraternity of atmospheric scientists.

Professor Aiguo Dai of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (DAES), named in late July a 2018 Fellow of the American Meteorological Society, will receive his award at AMS’s 98th Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas.

AMS fellows are chosen based on “outstanding contributions to the atmospheric or related oceanic or hydrologic sciences or their applications during a substantial period of years,” according the organization’s award criteria. New fellows are chosen each year by the Fellows Committee from a group no larger than two-tenths of 1 percent of all AMS members.

Dai becomes the sixth DAES faculty member to be so honored. The others are Lance Bosart, Robert Fovell, Daniel Keyser, John Molinari and current DAES chair Christopher Thorncroft.

Dai’s distinguished career began in his native China and extended to the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany, NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies/Columbia University, and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colo., before he came to UAlbany in 2012.

He has conducted extensive research dealing with much of the Earth’s climate system, including interactions of its many different components. Through this work, science and the public have acquired an enhanced understanding of the global water cycle, atmospheric convection and precipitation processes, atmospheric tides, climate model diagnostics and evaluation, long-term climate change, climate data analysis, hydrometeorology, Asian monsoons and drought.

Dai is listed by Thomson Reuters among the world’s top 1 percent of highly cited researchers in all fields, a level attained by only 4-6 scholars from the entire SUNY system during 2014-2016. He is currently UAlbany’s most cited scholar, according to Google Scholar.

Dai received his B.S. degree from Nanjing University and his master’s from the Institute of Atmospheric Physics in Beijing and obtained his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1996. He was a scientist at NCAR from 1997 to 2012, the last four years at NCAR’s second highest research category, Scientist III.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**The ETEC Building**

The future home of DAES will be in the Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC). Expected completion of the building is by 2021.
Comment on how your career trajectory has evolved following the completion of your Ph. D. After completing my Ph.D. in 2011, I took a National Research Council fellowship at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where I continued to work on research related to the extratropical transition of tropical cyclone and its midlatitude impacts and predictability. After my postdoc, I served as a program manager for a research grant program in the NOAA Climate Program Office in Silver Spring, Maryland, which supports projects to improve NOAA’s numerical modeling, seasonal predictions, and long-term climate outlooks. This past fall, I moved to NOAA’s Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, New Jersey, where I am in a new position as Associate Director.

What got you interested in meteorology? From the age of five years old or so, I was weather-obsessed. Discovering the Weather Channel and its “Tropical Update” that was on hourly during hurricane season did a lot to convert my excitement about weather into a desire to understand. The “Superstorm” of March ‘93 probably sealed the deal in terms of my passion — that was the first major Nor’easter that forecast models picked up on far in advance, meaning that for days I was consumed with frenzied anticipation. The payoff came in the joy of taking observations of thundersnow and 3-4”/hour snowfall rates at my parents’ house in southeastern Connecticut. Of course, I then had to endure the agony of the inexorable transition from heavy snow, to sleet, to rain.

What made you choose UAlbany for your graduate studies? I took a long-range forecasting class I really enjoyed as a senior at Penn State, which was co-taught by Rich Grumm, an National Weather Service forecaster and researcher (and Albany alum, as it turned out). In the class, Rich included a great introduction to large-scale flow regimes like the phases of the North Atlantic Oscillation that matter when considering forecasts longer than a week or so. So it was a no-brainer to come to UAlbany when I learned I’d have the opportunity to work on a National Weather Service-sponsored project on relationships between major Northeast precipitation events and flow regime transitions for my master’s thesis.

I came to grad school without any research experience or even much understanding of what professors did other than teach, so I didn’t know at the time that my advisors, Profs. Lance Bosart and Dan Keyser, were world-class scientists. All I knew was that the department had a strong reputation and the research opportunities sounded exciting (and they were!).

Give us a synopsis of what you enjoyed about the program. There is so much to praise about the program and department — the quality and breadth of classes, the tremendous research going on — but I can think of two attributes that distinguish the program from other top programs. The first is how dedicated the professors, instructors, and staff are to teaching and mentoring students. The second is the department’s collegiality and camaraderie.

Who were your most memorable professors or courses at UAlbany? I was beyond fortunate to have had two such expert, supportive advisors and teachers in Profs. Lance Bosart and Dan Keyser, and will always be grateful for their generosity in helping me develop as a scientist. As for courses, so many in the graduate program were outstanding. Prof. Chris Thorncroft’s second-semester graduate dynamics course, which included terrific lectures on potential vorticity thinking, exemplified that. I thought I was understanding the material pretty well, so was disappointed to get a mediocre score on the first exam. That hard but fair exam, however, made me realize I could ultimately master the material, but that to do so, I needed to seriously ratchet up the time and effort I spent studying. I look back at that class as an inflection point in my level of academic commitment.

As a successful woman in atmospheric science, what advice do you have for girls and young women interested in pursuing a career in STEM? Pursuing a career in STEM means being reminded constantly of how little you know — and, as a corollary, how much opportunity you have to learn and develop. A quote from the great baseball movie “A League of Their Own” fits well: “It’s supposed to be hard -- if it were easy, everyone would do it. It’s the hard that makes it great.” Taking advantage of academic opportunities that arise despite the fear you may fail can carry you a long way. It’s important to realize that even top scientists harbor self-doubt and have much to learn from others. Try to avoid feeling intimidated by or overly competitive with your classmates and colleagues and, instead, recognize them as the incredible resources they are. Learn from them, directly and by example, and collaborate with them whenever possible.
DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Applied R&D Returning $Millions to Stakeholders

The University at Albany was recently awarded a Center of Excellence designation for the development of the Center of Excellence in Atmospheric Sciences & Weather Enterprise. The Center’s mission is to engage with businesses and leverage the University’s atmospheric sciences expertise to drive economic development. The University’s CoE is one of eleven NYS Centers of Excellence managed by Empire State Development—New York State’s economic development agency.

The Center has relationships with many companies across weather-sensitive industries that include: energy, utilities, finance, transportation and agriculture. The Center works with businesses to identify gaps in existing weather-related products and services, and develops solutions to fill those gaps. To date the Center has helped partners generate $1.6M in economic impact.

To execute its economic development mission, the Center has access to research funding that can be used co-fund research projects and de-risk partner’s R&D investment.

Ongoing research projects include: the development of a weather-based outage and resource management tool for a power utility; development of a high-impact wind forecast for another utility; a twenty-year climatology forecast; weather sensor development; and development of a drone weather forecast.

The Center is led by Co-Directors Chris Thorncroft and Everette Joseph. For more information on the Center or to inquire about a research project please email Colby Creedon, Business Development Director (ccreedon@albany.edu).

AMS honors Lance Bosart at the Bosart Symposium

The 97th annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society, devoted its final day to the Lance Bosart Symposium. Bosart, distinguished professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (DAES), was honored for his vast influence on synoptic-dynamic meteorology — the study of weather processes occurring over a horizontal range of 1,000 kilometers or more — during the meeting at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle.

The symposium included four sessions of scientific presentations on the state of the field and its various areas of study. Many tributes were included in these presentations, honoring Bosart’s nearly 50 years of dedicated research and teaching.

DAES Enjoys 2017 Alumni & Friends Reception at the AMS Annual Meeting
Seven UAlbany undergraduate students spent two months last summer on the tropical island of Taiwan – but they weren’t on summer vacation.

The students, six majoring in atmospheric science, one in emergency preparedness and criminal justice, are studying typhoons and other extreme weather in Taipei, Taiwan, through a National Science Foundation (NSF) Partnership in International Research and Education (PIRE) grant. Announced in 2015 by U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, the 5-year, $4.5 million grant was awarded to advance research in early warning detection and disaster response of major storms. It is led by UAlbany’s Atmospheric Sciences Research Center (ASRC) and Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences in partnership with several universities and disaster and weather forecast agencies in both the United States and Taiwan.

“The goal of this project is to help improve our resiliency against increasing extreme weather likely linked to climate change,” said Everette Joseph, director of the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center. “We are not only improving our understanding and ability to predict these extreme weather events, but also preparing the next generation of atmospheric and social scientists.”

The project provides student researchers with travel and living expenses for the summer under the supervision of PIRE faculty.

In 2016, Cidny Ramirez, an atmospheric science major, was the project’s first student grant recipient. The number of students has grown substantially in year two, with UAlbany’s seven students joined in Taiwan by two others from Howard University. 11 Taiwanese students researched extreme weather in the United States this summer at UAlbany.

Taiwan provides students with a unique research opportunity, with on average, three to four typhoons striking the island each year. Ramirez was abroad when Nepartak, a category-5 cyclone, hit the country’s eastern shoreline in July 2016.

Students this summer witnessed Typhoon Nesat dump over 20 inches of rain on Taipei.

“I find the best way to learn about a new culture is by experiencing it, which is what I have had the opportunity to do in Taiwan,” said Erin Lynch, a senior atmospheric science major. “I feel very fortunate to be studying in the tropics during the summer months. We’ve experienced some incredible thunderstorms and heavy rain. It’s been a really fun experience. What can I say? I am a weather nerd.”

For Dan Bennison, who graduated shortly after returning from Taiwan from the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, studying extreme weather in Taiwan has provided valuable emergency response experience.

“Though I do not study weather, I believe this PIRE grant is something all emergency preparedness students would gain a lot from,” Bennison said. “I want to work in disaster relief following graduation. Through this experience, I’ve been able to learn about a new culture and study their response to extreme weather events. It was an opportunity I could not pass up and will be valuable for me as I prepare to start my career.”

The students worked with various partners across Taiwan that include the National Taiwan University, National Central University, Central Weather Bureau, the Taiwan Typhoon and Flood Research Institute and the National Center for Disaster Reduction (NCDR).

Nine UAlbany graduate students, also supported by the PIRE grant to conduct research on extreme weather, joined the undergraduates for an annual meeting of the entire U.S.-Taiwan PIRE team in August.

The undergraduates returned to Albany with high praises for the project.
DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Studying Taiwan’s Typhoons CONTINUED

“If students are interested in severe weather, I would highly recommend reaching out to the atmospheric science professors at UAlbany. Our campus has some of the top tropical meteorology professors in the country and they want to see us succeed,” Lynch said. “The PIRE project has been one of the best experiences of my life. It was an incredible opportunity.”

Students are encouraged to contact Everette Joseph via email for information on becoming future grant recipients.

K – 12 Outreach

DAES graduate students participated in several outreach events over the past year both on and off campus. Several graduate students visited Voorheesville High School in February to teach several science classes about cloud formation and El Niño, among other weather topics. For Earth Day, students dressed up as "weather friends" and gave out signed trading cards to SUNY Earth Day attendees as they visited various science demonstration tables staffed by other DAES students.

Professor Justin Minder hosted the 3rd annual Albany Weather Camp during the second week of August. DAES students assisted campers in completing their weather projects and guest- lectured about hurricanes and weather forecasting.

In November, the Museum of Science in Schenectady invited DAES students to participate in their Science Festival. Graduate students ran a portable green screen to give museum patrons the experience of being an on-air meteorologist and conducted atmospheric science experiments for several elementary school classes attending the festival on field trips.

VISITING SCHOLARS & PhD STUDENTS (7/1/2016 thru 12/31/2017)

**Visiting Scholars**

Dr. Zhaoming ’Alex’ Liang  
Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences, China  
Dr. DanQing Huang  
Nanjing University, China  
Dr. Mingxia Ji  
Lanzhou University, China  
Dr. Jian Zhu

**Visiting PhD Students**

Danielson Jorge Delgado Neves  
Federal University of Campina Grande, Brazil  
Jing Li  
Institute of Atmospheric Physics, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, China  
Minhua Qin  
Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology, China  
Jiao Chen  
School of Atmospheric Sciences - Nanjing University, China
The Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences welcomed 19 new students for the Fall 2017 semester. As a consequence, DAES now has 82 graduate students (including students advised by ASRC scientists), making it the largest atmospheric science graduate program in the United States by enrollment. This incoming class hails from 9 different states, and 4 different countries.

Left to right: Jannetta Richardson, Matthew Campbell, William Flamholtz, Hing Ong, Fangze Zhu, Shih Wei Wei, Minghao Zhou, Eli Turasky, Stephen Solimine, Marshall Pfahler, Alex Kubiniec, Paul Panhans, Heather Sussman, Kristina Mazur, Lukas Stewart, Yanna Chen, Daniel Reese, Yazmina Rojas and Hsiao-Chun Lin.

AWARDS CEREMONY
Honoring Legacies and Celebrating Excellence
On January 26, 2018, DAES will recognize six students at the DAES Annual Award Ceremony. Due to the generosity of past and present professors and their families, the department now has 6 scholarships and awards used to recognize the excellence of both undergraduate and graduate students.

The 2017-2018 recipients are:

- **Bernard Vonnegut Teaching Award** to Kevin Biernat
- **Arthur Loesch Scholarship** to Jessica Blair
- **Bosart Family Scholarship** to Cameron Paquette
- **Narayan R. Gokhale Research Award** to Rosimar Rios-Berrios
- **George Tai-Jen Chen, PhD ’71 Scholarship** to Matthew Brewer
- **Vince and Carol Idone Endowed Scholarship** to Alexander Siemenn
The New York State (NYS) Mesonet Early Warning Weather Detection System is a new advanced, statewide weather station network that provides unprecedented weather information across the state. The network totals 180 stations, including 126 standard, 20 snow, 17 surface energy budget and 17 profiler sites, with 178 of the stations now operating and collecting data. Funded by FEMA, the network is designed, implemented, and operated by scientists at the University at Albany with support from the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Awarded in Spring 2014, much of the first three years of the FEMA grant was spent designing and deploying the NYS Mesonet system. By 1 January, 2017, over 110 standard stations were installed, and so routine operations were underway throughout the year for the vast majority of stations. Indeed, over 12 million observations have now been collected by the network in 2017. To facilitate the deployment and operations, Mesonet field technicians have driven over 300,000+ miles.

All data are quality controlled and archived along with associated metadata. Real-time data along with graphical products are available at http://nysmesonet.org. The value of Mesonet’s data is becoming more widely known. The Mesonet has received well over 300 data requests so far this year with growing interest from a variety of sectors including emergency management, transportation, utilities, commerce, and agriculture. The NYS Mesonet looks forward to expanded capabilities, coverage, and collaborations with stakeholders in the years ahead.
ALUMNI NEWS

Jonathan Blufer (MS’17) is now working for Weather Routing, Inc. in Glens Falls, NY.

Lenore Correia (BS ’16) is a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Boston, MA.

Brandon Currier (BS ’17) is a pilot for American Airlines.

Alexis Drumm (BS ’16) is an environmental compliance coordinator at Suit-Kote Corporation in Syracuse, NY.

Pamela Eck (MS ’17) attended the AMS Policy Colloquium in Washington, DC, in June 2017 and assumed a Catastrophe Management Analyst position with Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in Boston in August 2017.

Zach Graff (BS ’17) is a meteorologist with Western Weather Group, in Chico, CA.

Ted Letcher (Ph.D. ’17) is now a Research Scientist at the Cold Region Research and Engineering Lab in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Renée Martin (BS ’17) is a meteorologist at Forensic Weather Consultants in Albany, NY.


Zach Murphy (MS’17) assumed a position with WeatherWorks in Hackettstown, NJ, in September 2017.

Kyle Pallozzi (MS’17) participated in the 2016 Hazardous Weather Testbed Spring Forecast Experiment at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK, in May 2017.

Philippe Papin (Ph.D. ’17) will assume a postdoctoral research associateship position with the Naval Research Laboratory in Monterey, CA, beginning in January 2018.

Lance Rayborn (MS ’17) is now at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). He is working with Dr. Hui Wan, Dr. Balwinder Singh and Dr. Phil Rasch on atmospheric model development and evaluation of DoE’s E3SM (Energy Exascale Earth System Model) at PNNL. This will primarily consist of verifying/improving cloud and turbulence parameterizations as well as establishing efficient strategies for testing/analyzing the model.

Mike Slifer (BS ’16) is a broadcast meteorologist at WVNS in Beckley, WV.

Molly Smith (MS ’17) is an Associate Scientist in the Global Systems Division (GSD) of NOAA’s Earth System Research Laboratory (ESRL) in Boulder, CO.

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**STUDENT NEWS**

**Alicia Bentley** was an NCAR graduate student visitor during summer 2017. She worked with Dr. Chris Davis. Alicia was also named a member of the AMS Weather & Forecasting Committee.

Undergraduate Environmental Sciences major, **Rob Bertolacci** was named the Fall 2017 student recipient for the Terra Award.

PhD candidate **Stephanie Stevenson** accepted a position as a Research Scientist working at the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida. Stephanie will be developing new GOES-16 products in order to improve tropical cyclone analysis and forecasting.

Graduate student **Dylan Card**, Environmental Science majors **Madison Corbeil** and **Radha Urribarri** and Atmospheric Science major **Reid Kisselback** received the UAlbany President’s Award for Leadership.

Ph.D. student, **Di Chen**, earned an Outstanding Student Paper Award at the 2016 AGU Fall meeting.

**Cameron Paquette** and **Marqi Rocque** received AMS Named Scholarships.

**Cameron Paquette** won the 2016 National Weather Association Phillips Family Undergraduate Meteorology Scholarship.

**WELCOME NEW STAFF**

**Ashley Turski**

Ashley Turski joined the department in June 2017 as the department Secretary. Her daily duties include that of receptionist and office manager. Ashley has worked in state service since 2010 and came to us from the Sociology department where she was an Office Assistant. Ashley holds her Bachelor’s degree in Health and Human Services from Empire State College. She has enjoyed her time here at DAES thus far.

**POST-DOCTORAL**

**Dr. Xiaohui Zhao**

Dr. Xiaohui Zhao earned her Ph.D. from the City University of Hong Kong in March 2017. Xiaohui’s Ph.D. research focused on understanding the effects of air-sea interaction on tropical cyclone intensity and structure by performing idealized numerical simulations with a coupled atmosphere-ocean model. After graduating, she joined the research group of Dr. Ryan Torn at UAlbany and is currently working on a project to evaluate new methods of representing model uncertainty in the HWRF ensemble prediction system and to provide more skillful ensemble forecasts of tropical cyclone track and intensity.
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Michael A. Boots, Development Officer, at 518-225-1229 or mboots@albany.edu

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