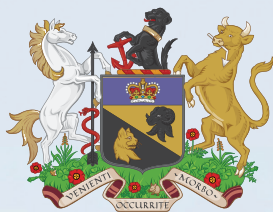


ALUMNI



ROYAL  
VETERINARY  
COLLEGE



JULY 2019

# RVC 4LIFE

ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## Travel Grants

Twists on Teaching

## Hardship Funds

Matched Funding

EDUCATION-LEADING  
FRIENDSHIP-FORMING  
LIFE-CHANGING

[rvc.ac.uk/rvc4life](http://rvc.ac.uk/rvc4life)



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## WELCOME



Photo credit: Mark Thomas

Welcome to the latest publication of RVC4Life that showcases the wonderful things we have been able to achieve during the past year, thanks to the impact of generous donations from our alumni.

This newsletter is just a small snapshot of the amazing work that you have made possible. We hope you find the accounts stimulating and that they convey the real value of your philanthropy. The RVC has had an incredible year, including the opening of the newly refurbished Hobday building and of course, being ranked #1

vet school in the world by the QS Rankings. The next 12 months promise to be just as exciting and progressive for the College, with major capital investment plans at Hawkshead, so do look out for further updates in our Eclipse magazine later this year.

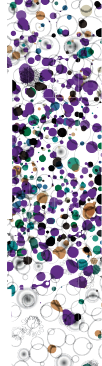
I hope you enjoy reading about all that we've been able to achieve together; please do stay in touch and be involved in our life and continued success.

Stuart W.J. Reid CBE  
Principal



"As a student who has previously benefitted from the RVC Alumni Award, I know how useful and important RVC Alumni are to the students of the RVC. In a University with such challenging degrees, the support given for both education and recreational activities is highly appreciated, with some excellent examples being shown in this newsletter. As the RVC Students' Union President 2019-20, on behalf of my fellow students, I would like to thank RVC Alumni for all the support they show the current students of RVC."

Jade Urquhart-Gilmore, President, RVC SU



# TRAVEL GRANTS

The RVC offers a range of travel grants that provide our students with the opportunity to increase their knowledge in areas of specific interest, gain skills in presenting their work to their contemporaries and inform their future career paths. This year, the Sam Hignett travel grants were awarded to:

## Anna Borlase

In November 2018, Anna attended the International Symposium of Veterinary Epidemiology (ISVEE) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. ISVEE is a global forum for research communication and collaboration within the field of veterinary epidemiology. Anna's travel grant enabled her to present the findings from her PhD project to an international audience of animal health researchers. Schistosomiasis, the parasitic disease that is the focus of her PhD, is well-known in the medical field but its importance as a veterinary disease is very much neglected.

Anna's project has highlighted the high prevalence of this disease in livestock in Senegal, West Africa, as well as the risk of schistosomiasis to human health via zoonotic transmission. This was a fantastic opportunity to communicate the severe welfare implications for both livestock and associated communities to other researchers.

"I am extremely grateful for the financial assistance that enabled me to attend this conference. It was a fantastic opportunity and a unique event that I would not have otherwise been able to participate in."



## Christina Paish

In September 2018, Christina attended the Network of Ecohealth and One Health (NEOH) conference in Bologna. The NEOH is an international network of over 200 One Health researchers and research users who aim to promote integrated approaches to health by bringing together multiple actors from the different health spheres and by enabling qualitative and quantitative evaluations of One Health and related approaches (e.g. EcoHealth).

Christina has a long-held interest in One Health, sparked in her second year of study when she travelled with her tutor group to Kenya to volunteer on a rabies vaccination programme in the Masai Mara.

"The impact of rabies on local animals, wildlife and people struck me and I've been interested by the role veterinarians play in impacting human health and the wider society since."

"The conference gave me an insight into not just current research, but the policy and governance aspects of One Health on a global scale. It has given me a lot to think about going forward and I'm sure it will help me to pursue a career in this field."

"This conference was so rewarding for me, thanks once again for the Sam Hignett Fund's help."



## Meg Rawlins

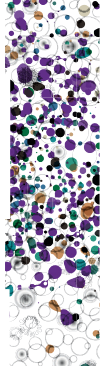
In January 2019, Meg attended the International Veterinary Students Association (IVSA) 67th Symposium in South Korea. Meg organised and conducted a workshop on animal welfare, where 25 delegates attended from countries ranging from Estonia to Thailand. The session discussed different perceptions of animal welfare and encouraged participants to think about why animal welfare issues vary from country to country, and how they are similar.

"I attended my first ever live IVSA Executive Committee and Officials meeting during which we discussed IVSA affairs and our plans for the next term. Although I had spoken to a lot of the Executive Committees and other Officials online during meetings, it was amazing to finally meet them face-to-face."

"I had the chance to explore South Korea's culture and food; Seoul was unlike anything I have ever experienced. I learned more about the veterinary profession and how it is taught differently internationally, and made veterinary friends from all over the world. I am very grateful for the Sam Hignett scholarship, as I would not have been able to attend without it!"







# HARDSHIP FUNDS – SUPPORTING RVC STUDENTS IN NEED

Help our bright, talented students overcome financial difficulties and successfully complete their studies by donating online at [www.rvc.ac.uk/alumnifund](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/alumnifund)

**M**any RVC students face financial problems during their courses as they juggle rent, travel and general living costs on top of their full-time studies. We believe that financial difficulties or coming from a low-income background should not hold talented individuals back from getting the best possible education, therefore the College offers hardship grants and financial advice to those struggling. Your donations to the Alumni Fund are vital in enabling this assistance to students in need.

This is more true than ever before as the College is seeing an increasing need for financial support in our students alongside a reduction in external funding, resulting in a struggle to provide financial support to our students of the same level we were previously able to.

We are now heavily reliant upon philanthropic donations to support the continuation of our hardship grants and would be most grateful if you would consider making a donation towards this area of urgent need at the RVC. Your support will prevent financial restrictions becoming a barrier to gaining a qualification and will help our bright, talented students overcome financial difficulties to successfully complete their studies.

## **The need for financial support in students**

All courses at the RVC require students to spend time in London, where rent and general living costs such as groceries and travel are particularly high. The UK Government advises that students need a budget of at least £1,265 per month to study in London (in addition to tuition fees) to cover food, accommodation, books, equipment, travel and socialising.

Many RVC students also face the additional costs of travelling to and equipping themselves for practical placements and rotations, which can

result in further costs associated with having access to a vehicle to facilitate these placements. This can cost up to £3,000 per year and is getting more expensive over time. Figures show that petrol prices have doubled in the last 20 years and car insurance has increased by 40% in the last five years alone, with an even higher increase for younger drivers. Travelling by train is not always a cheaper option, with train fares 20% higher now than ten years ago.

On top of these required placements, our students use their spare time to gain additional work experience and put many hours into studying – particularly during their final year. This combination of rotations, placements, study and work experience means they have little or no time to undertake part-time paid work to support their studies. In recent years we have seen an increase in students sacrificing work experience placements to work part-time, and this means they are missing out on vital experience that is essential not only to their studies but their future careers.





## How do your donations help?

Your donations are vital. Hardship grants continue to provide financial assistance to RVC students in need. Here are just a couple of examples of how hardship grants have helped this year.

### Freya Cooper BVetMed Year 5

Freya's family are not in a position to support her financially, and as a result, she has always relied solely on student finance and paid employment to support her studies. Previously, Freya had a part-time job, but due to the increased amount of work required during rotations, she was unable to keep her job.

"My financial situation was a source of stress to me. Until this year, I spent the majority of my holidays from university in paid employment to ensure I was able to support myself. This limited the amount of time I could spend revising for exams. This grant has enabled me to commit more time to revision during exam periods, which has significantly reduced my stress levels and assisted my learning.

"As I live in York, I spend a significant amount of money on fuel travelling to and from Potters Bar for EMS and rotations, which has reduced the money I have available to live on this year. Farm and mixed practice placements also require extensive travel. The extra money from the hardship grant has allowed me to continue to select practices that I feel will be most beneficial to my learning, rather than having to select practices based solely on travel distance to reduce costs.

"Thank you so much for this opportunity. It has been a fantastic assistance towards the end of this year and I am extremely appreciative."

### Daniel Baines BVetMed Year 5

Daniel experienced multiple concerns with his financial situation as his final year maintenance loan was reduced by almost £1,500 from the 4th year. He bought his first car to travel to and from EMS which then broke, and it was necessary to buy a second car in order to continue travelling to and from EMS. His parents were unable to offer financial help and he had built up credit card debt due to high living costs and a low maintenance loan during pre-clinical years.

"The Alumni Fund grant allowed me to pay the monthly costs of my car, insurance and fuel to get to and from EMS. It also ensured that all credit card bills and utility bills were paid so that I did not fall into arrears. I have been able to travel to home from university to visit my sick grandparents more often and the award has reduced my stress levels significantly and put less pressure on me to find money or work for money during the final stages of my degree. I would have struggled to pay rent during Easter as my loan does not cover that amount of money."



Freya Cooper

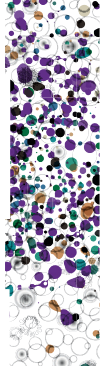
## A LASTING LEGACY

**Legacies are vital in helping us support and educate future generations of veterinary professionals and ensuring the Royal Veterinary College remains a leader in veterinary and biomedical sciences, clinical practice and education. We are so grateful to our generous alumni who remember the RVC in their wills and support our work in this special way.**

Recently Michael Johnstone, a 1961 graduate, left a gift to fund grants and bursaries for undergraduates wanting to qualify as vets but needing financial assistance to do so. Michael's legacy will enable us to help more students like Freya and Daniel who are facing unprecedented costs, which may prevent them from completing their studies.

If you would like to help future RVC students with a gift to the College in your Will, you may wish to talk to us to let us know your wishes and intentions. We can provide you with information about how to ensure your legacy will realise these wishes or simply send you a pack that you can read through in your own time. **Please call 01707 666237 or email [act@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:act@rvc.ac.uk) and we will be happy to help.**





# TWISTS ON TEACHING

**T**hanks to alumni support we have been able to fund three specialist teaching simulators. These simulators help students improve their knowledge and gain confidence by practising clinical skills on a life-size anatomical model before working with live animals.

## Colic simulator

The equine colic simulator arrived at the RVC in late 2018 after travelling all the way from a specialist company in Canada. The simulator has five sections of inflatable gastrointestinal tract, spleen, kidney, ovaries and other key anatomical features. The inflatable components can be arranged to simulate different colic presentations, something that is clearly not possible to teach with a live animal. It enables students to visualise what they are palpating, which is essential for understanding the nature of various intestinal displacements that may be encountered in practice.

In the photo below you can see that the side panel of the horse can be removed so the lecturer can see the student's hand position and movements, and provide immediate feedback to the student on their technique. Since the equipment also includes the reproductive tract and models of ovaries in different states, students will have an additional opportunity to practise examination of the reproductive organs.

Earlier this year the RVC hosted the Student Equine Veterinary Association Annual Congress and this model horse was used as part of a colic practical session. The students worked through a clinical case receiving history and basic clinical exam results and then had to undertake a rectal examination and abdominosentis using the model. Using their findings from these diagnostic procedures along with videos of an abdominal ultrasound from a live horse and the results of passing a nasogastric tube, the students had to make a decision about the likely diagnosis and the next course of action for the horses' treatment. Such immersive simulations using the

model are very powerful for the student learning experience because they are forced to take control of their own clinical reasoning within a safe environment.

## Vascular access simulator

The equine vascular access simulator provides a vital training and research tool for students to practise vascular access in horses. The equipment gives an anatomically correct and realistic simulated venepuncture training experience to enable students to practise drawing blood and inserting catheters.

Intravenous catheterisation and needle access to peripheral veins and arteries are an essential part of daily equine clinical practice. Sampling of blood, as well as intravenous injection and catheter placement, can be performed in this horse mannequin with peripheral blood vessels (plastic tubes) containing coloured fluid under a silicon skin. Using this simulator is more economical and practical than the use of equine cadaver material, which has in the past been used to teach and practise these skills.

These procedures are extremely risky in live animals as there is the potential for complications. Undergraduate students have few opportunities to perform these procedures on live horses during their clinical rotations so the equine vascular access simulator provides valuable experience that is very similar to a real-life situation.

The vascular simulator was showcased at a recent event at the Worship Company of Saddlers, with many attendees engaging with the model and the novel way of teaching complex procedures to trainee vets.







The equine vascular access simulator presents an anatomically correct training experience for students before working on live animals.

## Calving simulator

As many of you will fondly remember, the majority of farm animal training takes place at the RVC's Boltons Park Farm where students undertake a wide range of practical tasks and hands on training. Students participate in weekly herd health visits, feeding and nutrition classes, emergency vet visits, cattle and sheep foot trimming, and animal welfare

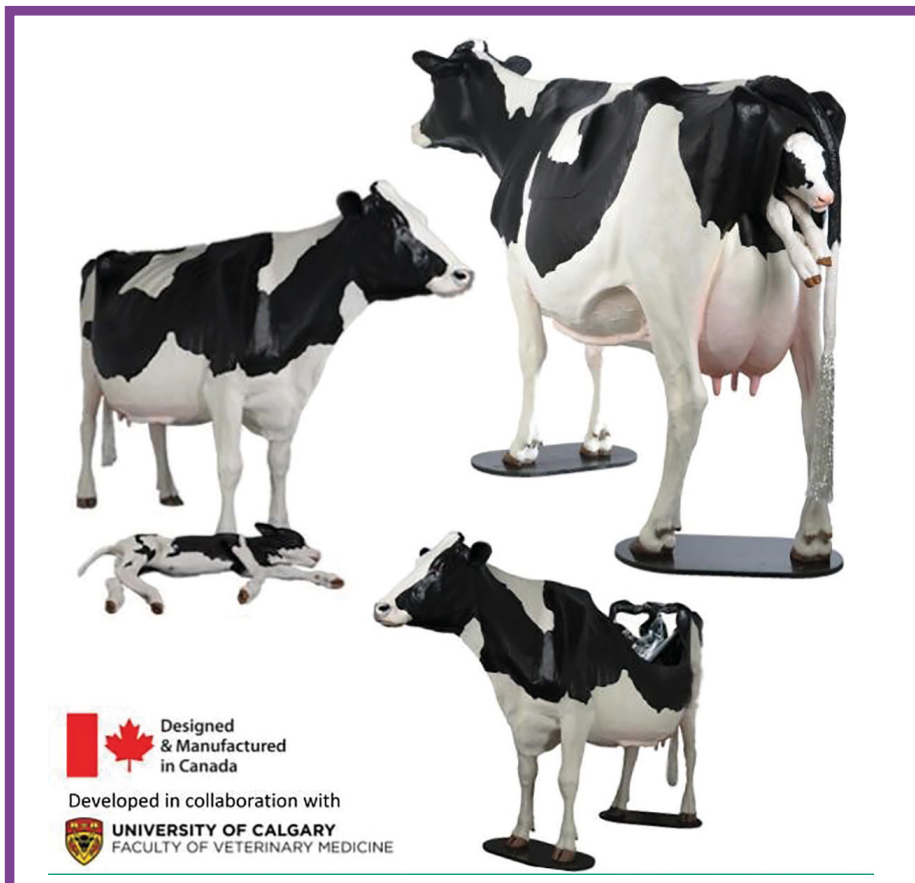
sessions. They also begin to learn the practical skills that they need before being faced with real cases, largely using simulator models which provide a low-risk environment for students to practise complex techniques. Not only is it essential to use these simulators to learn how to manage routine calving cases, but also abnormal or difficult births which can be very stressful for the cow and the vet.

More realistic models of calving simulators than those previously used are now available and we're thrilled to have been able to purchase a new calving simulator, which will be delivered in the autumn, to add to the range of farm animal teaching aids available at the RVC.

The new, life-sized calving simulator is supplied with various uterus inserts and a functional udder which can simulate mastitic milk in any quadrant. There is also a soft durable perineum panel, a removable tail and a matching Holstein calf to simulate different birthing and milking situations.

The simulator enables students to visualise the calving process, therefore providing a topographical perspective to the exercise which is essential for understanding the nature of various situations that may be encountered in practice. Another useful part of the design of this model is that, as with the colic simulator, the side panel of the cow can be removed enabling teaching staff to see the student's hand position and movements and provide immediate feedback to the student on their technique.

**Thank you for your help in securing these teaching aids for our students.**





# MATCHED FUNDING

Your donations enable Students' Union clubs and societies to provide the best possible student experience for RVC students and support a healthy work-life balance by offering a chance for them to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities.

Our matched funding scheme encourages students to take the initiative and fundraise for their chosen clubs and societies, with their efforts matched by the RVC Alumni Fund. Here's just a snapshot of student events we have been able to support this year...

## VETS & NURSES INTERPROFESSIONAL CLUB (IPEC)

In 2017 the Vets and Nurses Interprofessional Club was founded by veterinary nursing students Rosalind Brown and Tia Barlow, and veterinary student Rachel Garty. The club was formed to run free extra-curricular events that not only revised common topics between the veterinary and veterinary nursing curricula, but also improved teamwork and increased interprofessional knowledge, with the aim of encouraging integration of the veterinary and veterinary nursing cohorts. The club is the first of its kind at a UK vet school.

Events so far have included a parasitology revision afternoon and quiz, an obesity clinic consisting of a series of lectures followed by clinical scenarios, and a bandaging and wound care event featuring various practical stations.

The most recent event focused on communication and anaesthesia. Students worked in teams of three vets and three nurses, taking a case through from admitting a patient for a procedure, to setting up for anaesthesia and a CPR practical. Following this, students were debriefed on their communication during the CPR scenario and practised communicating when something has gone wrong to an owner.

The Alumni Fund helps to purchase materials and has ensured that these important team-building events can continue to be free of charge for years to come.

## PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY

The Performing Arts Society is a much-valued creative outlet for many students and their production also gives those students (and staff!) not inclined to tread the boards with an opportunity to have a fun night out! This year's show was a little-known musical called 'Urinetown' and the Director, Matty Clarkson tells us more about it.



"Our show 'Urinetown: The Musical!' went spectacularly! As Director, I honestly could not be more proud of my cast. Initially everyone was a bit sceptical, but it turned into one of our favourite shows to date. We really did up our production value compared to previous years with better lighting, sound, props and costumes, thanks to alumni funds. We also had the funds to attend a professional theatre workshop catered to one of the numbers in the show. Thank you so much for your support, the funds we received helped greatly."

## TENNIS

The RVC Tennis club is steadily growing and Alumni Funds have helped with the costs of their training and travel to matches. The club's weekly practise sessions at the local Potters Bar tennis club are a fun stress-relief from the students' intense workloads. The matches they play against other universities provide a great community feel and a chance to meet other people





with both similar and different interests. Club president Harvey says:

"The friendships within the club have expanded outside the courts and made university life all that much easier for us all. In recent years, our efforts have been focused on providing social activities that allow our members to really talk to each other and provide a comfortable easy-going environment, a nice break from the conventional night-out in the city. Weekend trips to the country, bowling nights, board-game parties and winter ice-skating are just some of the things we've loved doing in these recent years. At the very least, our livers are thankful!

"As a club, we have made efforts to play a bigger part of the RVC community. Aside from our splendid selection of tennis themed bake-sale goods we have provided to students and staff, we have also held annual friendly tennis tournaments, as well as our first ever "Staff vs Students" tennis tournament.

The victory of the staff members has only fuelled our excitement and we are keen to host similar events in the future, at least to regain our pride."

## RVC MUSIC FESTIVAL

The RVC Music Society was established in September 2017 and in 2018 it hosted the RVC's first ever Summer Music Festival at the Hawkshead Campus, where students were able to showcase their musical talents for the first time! The profits from the concert were kindly matched by the Alumni Fund and were saved for use the following year.

This year, using those saved funds, the Music Society has been able to provide much more for their members as well as reach the wider RVC community. The money was put towards buying new equipment such as music sheets and stands and the remaining money, together

with SU funding, was spent on the RVC Music Festival 2019 which had a turnout of almost 100 students, staff, friends, family and local residents of the Barnet area. The concert featured Professor Stuart Reid as a guest performer!

Through exposure from these concerts, the university has also begun integrating music into RVC events more and more. For example, the Music Society worked with the Advice Centre earlier this year to bring a live music performance to the Hawkshead Campus to raise awareness for University Mental Health Day.

They are also currently working closely with the RVC Estates team to build the first purpose-built music room on campus, with hopes that this will greatly increase the welfare and mental health of both students and staff at the RVC.





# CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS

Work on Hawkshead Campus development is now well underway with the demolition of the Clinical Block currently taking place. The construction of the new building can then begin. Here you can see the progress of the clinical block demolition, and an artist's impression for the new development.

The RVC will soon be launching an appeal to raise funds towards the campus development and you will be able to read more about the work in the Eclipse magazine, out later this year.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

We'd love to see you at one of our alumni events this year. If you would like more details please email us at [development@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:development@rvc.ac.uk)

## **Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) Workshop for BVetMed 2018 Graduates**

**SATURDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER**  
Hatfield, Hertfordshire

Invites have been sent out to BVetMed 2018 graduates from the VDS for this event. Please let us know if you have not received yours.

## **Annual Alumni Reunion Day SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER RVC Hawkshead Campus**

Each year we invite back alumni who are celebrating an anniversary since graduating from the RVC. Whether it is 5 years, 10 years, 20 years or more since you left, you are all welcome to return to take a look around the campus and learn about the developments that have taken place over the years (and there

have been quite a few!). It is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with classmates. You should have received an email or postal invitation. If you have not received yours and would like to know more, please visit [www.rvc.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/alumni).

## **London Vet Show Alumni Reception THURSDAY 14TH NOVEMBER Excel, London**

This is our annual reception hosted for alumni during the London Vet Show. Everyone is welcome – come and meet up with fellow alumni and RVC staff. Tickets will only be available from the RVC stand at the London Vet Show on Thursday 14th November on a first come, first served basis. We hope to see you there.

## INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI NETWORKING GROUPS

Do you live or work overseas? Over the last year we have been setting up some International Networking Groups and if you are in these areas, we would love for you to get involved. Hong Kong, New York and, most recently, Boston, have all had successful events to start their groups. We are looking to launch other new groups later this year, so watch this space!

If you are interested in knowing more about our existing groups or helping to lead the groups of the future, please email us at: [development@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:development@rvc.ac.uk)



**The launch of the International Alumni  
Networking Group in Boston, United States  
of America.**

# RVC ALUMNI JOBS BOARD

## **Do you have vacancies where you work? Or are you looking for a new challenge yourself?**

The RVC is committed to creating employable graduates that meet the needs of the veterinary sector and beyond.

Our commitment to creating leaders of the future does not stop at helping our graduates into employment; we recognise that finding the right role, offering professional development and job satisfaction, is just as important for our graduates and their employers.

With that in mind, we have an online Jobs Board for final year students and alumni to use and advertising on it is free of charge.

There are a number of vacancies advertised and the Jobs Board is constantly updated so why not take a look? A range of roles, both UK and overseas, are advertised.

You can find the Jobs Board at [www.rvc.ac.uk/alumnijobsboard](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/alumnijobsboard)

The RVC Careers Fair will be held at the Hawkshead Campus in November. If you would like a stand, where you have the opportunity to talk to students about your organisation and any upcoming opportunities that you have, please email [development@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:development@rvc.ac.uk).



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

With changes in data protection legislation, it is more important than ever before to let us know if you want to hear from us and how you would like to be contacted. Don't forget to let us know if you move house, change jobs or update your email address.

We'd love to keep sending you newsletters like this one, Eclipse magazine and information on reunions, and we can only do that if we know how to contact you!

If you would like to continue hearing from us, please let us know: **[www.rvc.ac.uk/keepintouch](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/keepintouch)**

For changes in contact details, please email **[development@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:development@rvc.ac.uk)** or update them on the RVC4Life portal: **[www.rvc.ac.uk/rvc4life-alumni/login](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/rvc4life-alumni/login)**

You can also keep up-to-date with the latest news and upcoming events by joining our LinkedIn group – search for Royal Veterinary College Alumni – or by following us on Facebook and Twitter.



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[@RVCAumni](https://twitter.com/RVCAumni)