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TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR FUTURE

At Sandburg, we're driven by a passion to empower students and uplift the communities we proudly serve. With programs as diverse as our students, our campuses in Galesburg and Carthage offer the perfect mix of innovation and affordability, with state-of-the-art facilities and expert instruction coupled with financial support opportunities. Here, warmth and helpfulness prevail. From a welcoming "hello" to in-depth guidance, we actively nurture each student — wherever they are on their academic, professional or personal journey.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR CHARGER COMMUNITY

It's my pleasure to invite you to reflect on the many exciting things happening at Sandburg during the past year and celebrate the many accomplishments of students, staff and alumni. While we take this time annually to look back on what we've achieved, it's also a time to look forward into the future and share some exciting directions and initiatives.

This fall marked the opening of the **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CENTER**, a project three years in the making, which houses our nursing, natural sciences and health professions academic services.

In addition to the state-of-the-art classroom and laboratory space, it also boasts a wellness center, a business center and a beautiful atrium filled with natural light, which will serve as the location for public events, graduation ceremonies and alumni gatherings for years to come. The Science & Technology Center marks the first of several major construction projects on campus. Carthage also upgraded the science lab space there, and with the addition of two full-time faculty and a licensed practical nursing program, we're excited to serve our communities in that part of the district.

From left: Dr. Seamus Reilly, Sandburg president; Carrie Hawkinson, vice president of academic services; DeVone Eurales, Sandburg board of trustees chair; Zair Ruiz Velazquez, student trustee; and Chad Long, Sandburg Foundation board of directors president, cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the Science & Technology Center. **SANDBURG MAGAZINE**

In spring 2025, we'll open the renovated **STUDENT CENTER**, which will house all the student development offices and provide fantastic areas for our students to study, relax and collaborate in the many clubs and organizations in the student inclusion space. The center also will house a security office and a brand-new café. The newly renovated Student Center connects to the Science & Technology Center and continues the same naturally lit and beautifully designed space to help students feel safe and comfortable as they study and collaborate with staff and other students.

Future buildings are already in discussion, beginning with the **CHARGER CENTER** — an athletic and conference center to support our community — and an additional academic building to provide updated teaching spaces.

We're excited to share the support and partnerships with contributors and the community who support our students as they overcome barriers to their education and strive to achieve their goals. The testimonials of our alumni are clear proof of how Sandburg has enabled them to achieve their dreams. Most of this dream management is choreographed by the outstanding **SANDBURG FOUNDATION** team, which continues to exceed its goals and provide support for staff and faculty though innovation grants, as well as for students in its careful management of donor funds and outreach to potential supporters.

We also gave our brand a refresh, including a new logo, shortened name and updated website to reflect the voices of our students, staff and faculty. Our faculty and staff continue to provide superior teaching and excellence in the classroom, and our use of technology makes Sandburg a national leader in innovation and student support.

Sandburg is positioned to continue to evolve and expand services to ensure our students and communities continue to flourish. We encourage you to visit our beautiful campuses, sign up for a class or workshop, or consider supporting our students and departments with a donation as we charge ahead into the future.

— Dr. Seamus Reilly, president



MEET SANDBURG



MISSION

To provide all students with opportunities for success.

VISION

Where dreams come to life and lives come to change.

CORE VALUES

Excellence Collaboration Integrity Respect

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View our nondiscrimination statement at sandburg.edu/eeo-nondiscrimination. For more info on graduation rates, debt and more, visit sandburg.edu/consumerinfo.

SANDBURG MAGAZINE

Laura Nagel, editor Aaron Frey, assistant editor, staff writer **Bill Gaither**, assistant editor, photographer Stacey Rucker '97, staff writer



OUESTIONS ABOUT THE MAGAZINE ITSELF?

Contact Sandburg Marketing marketing@sandburg.edu

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SANDBURG MAGAZINE

50 ALUMNI, 50 STATES

LEAD THE CHARGE — Our 50 Alumni, 50 States campaign continues with the goal of featuring at least one Sandburg alumnus from each state. We want to discover where our alumni members are living, working and making a difference in their communities. Stay connected, help us complete our map and inspire the next generation of Chargers by sending us your Sandburg story that identifies where you live and a bit about your path. Are you from a state already highlighted? Go ahead and send us your information anyway.

We want to hear from you!



To share your Sandburg story and participate in 50 Alumni, 50 States, contact us:

309.341.5330 / alumni@sandburg.edu / sandburg.edu/50Alumni50States Scan the QR code or visit sandburg.edu/50 to update your information.

Utah Missouri Wisconsin Dr. Ethan Peterson '16 Sam Scott '21 Kadin '19 and Heidi '19 Courson Student physical therapist, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse (Kadin) Industrial maintenance Chiropractor and founder of Central Division Chiropractic mechanic setup lead, Genpak Recreation therapist, Riverside Transitional Care (Heidi) Indiana lim Williams '81 Pilot, Delta Air Lines North Carolina Lindsay Lankford '11 Clinical associate in the school of nursing, **Duke University** Doug Brining '89 Attending veterinarian/assistant VP research administration/ assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, University of Texas Medical Branch

SANDBURG SPECIFICS





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2025 ALUMNI AWARDS

DO YOU KNOW A SANDBURG ALUM WHO DESERVES TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SUCCESS?

Nominate* them at sandburg.edu/alumniawards for Sandburg's 2025 Distinguished Alumni or Pacesetter awards, which are part of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association awards. Already nominated someone in a previous year? Resubmit them so they're considered for this year's awards. Nominations will be accepted until Feb. 13.

Some previous alumni award winners with their graduation year are featured below. For a full list of alumni award recipients, visit sandburg.edu/alumniawards.

NOMINATE ▶ **ALUMNI AWARDS**



sandburg.edu/alumniawards

*Family members, partners/spouses of the nominee cannot make a nomination



Dr. Stephanie Saey, 2015



Jamal Ward, 2000

Dakota Hicks, 2017 Robert Mason, 1972 Angel Peterson, 2016 Anya Pshenychny, 2010 Jim Purlee, 1970 **Elvith Santoyo-McNaught, 2010** Dr. Becca Schwieter, 2014 Cassie Sherwin, 2014

Dr. Susan Swartwout, 1987 Tina Veal, 1991 Naomi Wai, 2001 Matt Wolford, 2008







DID YOU KNOW?

66,000 Sandburg alumni members

have completed at least one credit hour, and there are more than

23,500 Sandburg graduates.

Share your personal or professional milestones such as promotions, awards/honors, career moves, and wedding and birth announcements with the Sandburg alumni relations office by emailing alumni@sandburg.edu or scanning the QR code.



SHARE YOUR INFO

Scan the QR code with your phone to update your information. sandburg.edu/connecttoday

CAMPUS EXPANSION & RENOVATIONS

Opened for the start of the 2024 fall semester, the multimillion-dollar Science & Technology Center now serves as the crown jewel of the Galesburg campus, representing the most impactful project undertaken at the college since its primary construction in 1969.

This state-of-the-art facility houses programs for health professions, natural sciences, nursing and dental hygiene, as well as a business center and wellness suite. Construction on the S+T Center began in early 2023, and it's part of an updated campus master plan that serves as a roadmap for improvements and developments on Sandburg's grounds in the coming years.

provides the college direction for the immediate future and also allows us to envision the ways in

which Sandburg can continue to grow to support our district," President Dr. Seamus Reilly said.

"As Carl Sandburg said, 'Nothing happens unless

immediate response to the critical workforce and

economic development needs of our district but also allows us the opportunity to reimagine the

first a dream,' and this plan allows for some

campus to prepare for future generations."

Additional phases for the campus master plan include renovations to update the Student Center Charger Center, an athletic and conference center that will vastly expand the athletics capabilities of the campus and allow Sandburg to host events of



Designed by Farnsworth Group and built by River City Construction, the multi-story, 46,733-squarefoot S+T Center offers views of Lake Storey on the inside edge of the campus in addition to serving as a modern-age classroom facility.

"It has the advantage of really centralizing a lot of areas for our students, and it makes a very dramatic and obvious destination point — no matter how you approach campus," Reilly said.

— in progress now — and construction of the a grand scale.





CHRISTINA STONE. '04 NURSING PROFESSOR

"The students definitely like being part of this new beginning. The building itself is beautiful and bright. The wellness suite for students is always full — something that's been a welcome addition.

The pod mentality in the classrooms is great for activities and better learning between each student. Those collaborative learning spaces make it easier for students to immerse themselves in real-world scenarios, and thrive in an atmosphere that encourages inquiry, compassion and critical thinking — key qualities for nurses in today's health care landscape.

The new technology is fabulous, including high-fidelity manikins, and the smartboards are remarkable and easy to use for instructors and students."



DAVE BURNS. '88 BIOLOGY PROFESSOR

"I love the new labs. On the first day, I was kind of apprehensive. I just wanted to be excited about it, and it was kind of neat that first week. The labs have these giant touchscreens. Biology is so visual, and to be able to display the online component of my courses and things like visual body apps in class is pretty awesome. I can tie my microscopes directly in through Apple TV. When I have extra time, I'm usually in the lab playing with stuff.

The students are really taking to it, and it's nice to have all the health-related fields in the same building. For years, I'd have tons of nursing students, and I'd never see them after the year they had me in class. Now I see them all the time because we're in the same building. I hope it does lead to more opportunities for students because there's nothing like this at other community colleges I've been to."





FROM 'DUNGEON' TO DEMURE

Thanks to the design eye of an alumna, efforts led by the Student Government Association (SGA) and contributions from the Sandburg Foundation, a tired space got a dramatic makeover ahead of this academic year.

While a student at Sandburg, Missy Paris remembered the Loft Café not exactly looking like the most welcoming spot on the Galesburg campus.

"I don't want to be mean to the space, but it was definitely outdated," said Paris, who graduated from Sandburg in 2018. "It was affectionately called the 'dungeon."

Previously, the Loft Café featured deep-red walls, dark carpet, dim lighting and sets of circular tables with chairs. While it served as a convenient place for people to eat, it didn't offer much in the way of functionality and was ultimately under-utilized.

"I felt like that space was abandoned. Nobody was really paying attention to it," said Stephane Massamba, president of the SGA. "It was abandoned, but not rejected. I wanted to see life sitting in that space."

GRANTED A NEW LOOK

To help breathe new life into the area, SGA members applied for a Sandburg Foundation innovation grant, which are awarded annually to launch new and innovative ventures to drive student success. The Loft Café project was one of 12 grants awarded this year. In total, the Foundation awarded \$88,500 for those projects.

"We wanted to have a brand-new place," Massamba said, "a place where students can feel even more at home."

With funding secured, SGA advisor Genny Stevens, director of student engagement & leadership, knew exactly who to turn to for help with the redesign: Paris, a former SGA president herself, who now works as an interior designer. She gathered input from SGA members, other students, faculty and staff about how they wanted to see the Loft Café used and what it should look like.

A MEANINGFUL MAKEOVER

"Instead of just diving headfirst and saying, 'We want a couch and a table,' it's more about figuring out how you need to use the space. They wanted it to be flexible. The questions they asked were so intelligent and thoughtful, and their vision and eye for design was incredible," Paris said. "Sandburg is always going to be a part of me. The opportunity to come back and make a difference at the place that did so much for me was so special."

The dark walls were replaced with a much lighter, neutral shade to make the room seem bigger and brighter. A variety of seating types now gives it more of a lounge look than a cafeteria feel. Low-hanging light fixtures gave way to lighting closer to the ceiling, allowing for greater versatility in the room.

Suddenly, the "dungeon" looks demure.



"It's like an old house that didn't have a value. Then you buy it, you rebuild it, renew it and now it has value to it," Massamba said. "We wanted to leave a legacy behind where students will say, 'Hey, I remember there was a group that did this. We can do this too before we leave.' We wanted to feel that way and challenge everybody to do something in their time while they're here."

INNOVATION GRANTS

"The Foundation is able to make these innovation grants available in part because of donor generosity,"

said Eric B. Johnson, chief advancement officer for the Sandburg Foundation. "We're eager to partner and play a role in developing innovations that positively impact student success, our communities, industry and the district."

\$88,500 awarded

Innovation grant funds this year increased more than \$55,000 from 2023.

In addition to the Loft Café renovation, other projects that received innovation grant funding for 2024 included:

LIBRARY SHELVING REFRESH — LIBRARY

Transforms the library shelving system into a more dynamic, user-centric space that embraces technology, provides better accessibility, fosters collaboration and improves the overall library experience for all using the space.

HANDS-ON VERNIER STEM EQUIPMENT - MATH & NATURAL SCIENCES

Offers a groundbreaking approach to education by combining innovative features with practical experimentation, empowering students to explore and understand the fundamental principles of physics in a more engaging manner.

NURSING SIMULATION LAPTOPS — NURSING

Five new Latitude 5340 laptops enhance the functionality and effectiveness of the nursing simulation lab. Improves students' medication administration and documentation by adding experiential learning to knowledge acquired in the dosage calculation course with a realistic bedside experience.

SWING CADDIE (SC)-3001 GOLF LAUNCH MONITORS — ATHLETICS (MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GOLF)

Incorporating three monitors into practices and competitions revolutionizes training for Sandburg golfers, giving them a wealth of accurate and immediate data that empowers players to refine skills and optimize team performance.

PORTABLE INFLATABLE PROJECTION SCREEN — INFORMATION SERVICES

Enriches campus life, promotes community engagement and offers a versatile platform for various events and activities.

SOLAR ASTRONOMY TECHNOLOGY — MATH & NATURAL SCIENCES

Two new solar telescopes offer a unique and engaging way to explore the sun, and grant funding helped purchase glasses for last spring's solar eclipse.

SYNERGY VIDEO ENHANCEMENTS — ATHLETICS (BASEBALL)

Provides in-depth video analysis, allowing coaches to break down player performance frame by frame, precisely identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

CPR FEEDBACK TRAINING MANIKINS AND AEDS — FITNESS CENTER

Includes six CPR training manikins and six automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The manikins offer immediate feedback via an app on the efficacy of the skills being performed during CPR classes.

NOMAD DENTAL X-RAY IMAGING DEVICES — DENTAL HYGIENE

These two devices broaden students' experiences, employability and exposure to innovative technology while allowing instructors to train current and future students with the most recent technology being used for dental X-ray imaging. Also provides superior imaging for patients in the dental hygiene clinic.

CAREER PATHWAY EXPLORATION INITIATIVE — WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

These workshops introduce participants at Monmouth's Recharge Teen Center to a variety of career opportunities and the corresponding educational pathways offered by Sandburg, empowering teens with the knowledge and experience needed to envision their future careers and understand how Sandburg can facilitate their journey toward achieving their goals professionally.

ESKILL WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Offers customized tests across various disciplines, including construction, welding, technical computer applications and health care. In continuing to use this subscription-based service, Sandburg can use data analysis to identify specific training needs, enhancing the college's ability to design collaborative corporate training programs.



For more information about innovation grants or to make a gift in support of this initiative, email Eric B. Johnson at ebjohnson@sandburg.edu, or call 309.341.5349.

PRACTICAL NURSING PROGRAM

a practical addition in Carthage

Despite the urging of her coworkers, Sarah VanBrooker hadn't mustered the courage to go back to school for her practical nursing license.

ONE EMAIL CHANGED THAT.

VanBrooker, a medical assistant at Carthage Memorial Clinic, got a message that Sandburg was set to begin offering a practical nursing (PN) certificate program that could be completed entirely at its Carthage campus.

"IT WAS THE PUSH I NEEDED."

said VanBrooker, 44, of Colchester.

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"I immediately jumped on it because it was right there in town. It was awesome. It's so close; it's so accessible. Without that, I wouldn't have done it." 77

Sandburg conducted a feasibility study last year about implementing its PN program in Carthage, and its addition was approved last fall by the Illinois Board of Nursing. Sandburg's practical nursing program is a one-year certificate with limited enrollment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. PNs in Illinois earn just more than \$28 per hour for an annual average salary of nearly \$59,000.

The college already had — and continues to offer a certified nursing assistant (CNA) course at Carthage, but students in that area couldn't complete additional levels of nursing education without having to attend Sandburg's Galesburg campus or a different school.



"We're already seeing interest from previous CNA graduates who want to go on and complete the PN program here," said Dr. Jodi Pospeschil, executive director of the Carthage campus. "There are a lot

For VanBrooker, that convenience was the confirmation she needed to know it was the right time for her to go back to school. A practical nursing program 20 minutes from her home was, well, practical.

of people who like the fact they can stay in their

own community and finish this program."

"The drive time (to attend another college) would take too much time out of my day," VanBrooker said. "I wouldn't be able to get anything else done."

VanBrooker has been able to attend her classes at Sandburg while still working at Carthage Memorial Clinic and as an EMT for Hancock County Emergency Medical Services. She's on track to complete the PN program this summer, and once licensed, she hopes to become a hospice nurse.

"It's going to be a dream come true," VanBrooker said of what the program's pinning ceremony will mean to her. "I'm probably going to be a blubbering mess. I would like special people in my life to be there, even coworkers who've pushed me. I would love for them to be there to see it. It's going to mean everything. I've wanted this for so long."

CARTHAGE CAMPUS UPDATES

NURSING LAB

The nursing lab was expanded, thanks to contributions from the Tracy Family Foundation and the Sandburg Foundation, creating a suite of classrooms and an office dedicated to nursing programs.

SCIENCE LAB

The Sandburg Foundation also helped support renovations in the science lab, including an 85-inch smartboard, new cabinets, countertops, tables and chairs, as well as a prep lab connected to the classroom.

FOOD PANTRY

Carthage's resource room now is a fully functioning food pantry for students and the community. Monthly deliveries from River Bend Food Bank include fresh produce and frozen meat thanks to contributions from the Tracy Family Foundation.

SENSORY ROOM

As part of a mental health grant from the Tracy Family Foundation, the campus sensory room acquired a zero-gravity massage chair, giving students a place to unwind. The room also includes bean bag chairs, rocking chairs, light-canceling goggles and a sound machine.

MEN OF DISTINCTION, **WOMEN OF CHARACTER**

celebrate 10th anniversaries

For Anthony Law, several memorable moments took place as Sandburg's Men of Distinction and Women of Character organizations celebrated their 10th anniversaries with a reunion event last summer, but one in particular caught his eye.

Derrell Cannon, an original member of MOD, was there with his young daughter. Several past and present MOD members approached Cannon and thanked him as his daughter stood next to him. Law couldn't help but notice the look in the young girl's eyes.

"I've known her since she was born. She looked at her dad in a way she never did before," said Law, Sandburg's coordinator of diversity and inclusion. "She saw him as a different person. She saw him through their eyes, and, man, that's awesome."

The moment encapsulated what Law hoped the groups' anniversary reunion would accomplish: An appreciation of the past, a celebration of the present and an acknowledgment of what's still to come.







"I wanted those who started this to see the legacy they had left behind," Law said,

"and I wanted the current students and those who are in the process to see some who have gone on, to see where they are in their careers and to see what the future looks like."



'I HAD A PURPOSE.'

MOD and WOC are organizations that focus on building relationships with first- and second-year Sandburg students to help them succeed throughout their college experience while mirroring Sandburg's core values of excellence, collaboration, integrity and respect. Their mission is to strengthen bonds between students and develop leaders through community service while increasing cultural awareness both academically and socially at Sandburg and throughout the community.

Since their inceptions in the fall of 2014, MOD and WOC have helped produce scores of Sandburg graduates who've put in countless hours of community service at local festivals, food banks, grade schools and other events.

"It showed me that I had a purpose," said WOC alumna Vanessa Gibbs, a 2023 Sandburg graduate. "That's really what got me through school."

Ask just about any MOD or WOC member to describe the groups, and the word "family" is almost certain to pop up.

"It was a big family that I could always lean on when things were going rough," said alumnus Mike Martinez '20, who joined MOD in 2017. "We're all like best friends, and it was a big part of me becoming who I was in getting more involved at Sandburg. It really made me who I am today."

Said Tammy Huffaker '16, who joined WOC in 2015 when she came to Sandburg as a nontraditional student: "It was one of the best choices I made because it made me more confident and built my self-esteem back up. It's like you had an extended family. It just makes you a better person all the way around."

RECONNECTING FROM NEAR AND FAR

The reunion event brought back alums from as close as Galesburg to as far away as Texas. Graduates with master's degrees and those who are enrolled in doctoral programs were there. Married couples came back to introduce their kids to friends they may not have seen in years.

"I was holding back tears most of the time because it's like we were part of history," Martinez said. "We weren't the first ones, and we aren't the current ones. But we were along that line of history in keeping this legacy going."

LEARN MORE ▶ **10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**



sandburg.edu/modwocanniversary



SKILLSUSA COMPETITION

turns skilled trades into sports.

On a spring morning in downtown Peoria, the sounds of circular saws buzzing, hammers pounding and drills whirring echoed through the air. But these weren't the clatters of a construction site on the city's streets. These emanated from the more than 2,000 students who'd converged inside the Peoria Civic Center to compete at the SkillsUSA Illinois Championships.

"It is wild," said Sandburg student Nathan Taylor, who competed in the automotive technology category, as he looked around the convention hall. "There are so many people with so many different interests just in this one spot, and they're all here because of a common interest."

SkillsUSA is a national organization that serves students at the college, high school and middle school level who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilledservice occupations and for further education. It includes career competitions in dozens of categories, ranging from construction to cosmetology, health sciences to hospitality, criminal justice to computer programming. Students go through qualifying competitions and can advance to the state and national levels.

This marked Sandburg's second year participating in SkillsUSA. The college walked away with six golds and eight total medals at the state championships. The gold medalists advanced to the SkillsUSA Championships in Atlanta in June. One of them, Gavin Gerard, earned bronze in masonry, becoming the college's first medalist at a SkillsUSA national competition.



"There aren't many clubs that offer something like this, and it's a fantastic experience," said Gerard, who also won gold in the job interview category at the state level for the second year in a row. "The opportunity to do this is unparalleled. It's so much fun. I cannot stress that enough. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and there's nothing really like it."

Each category is run and judged by industry leaders and representatives, giving students an opportunity to meet with and show off their expertise to future employers. Just a couple of hours into his masonry project at the state competition, Gerard had already secured an apprenticeship offer from a local contractor.

"The employers know that the students who are competing right now are the cream of the crop because they've passed the qualifying exam, and that distinguishes them from other students," said Kang Hee Hong, director of workforce and community education and Sandburg's SkillsUSA advisor.

Sandburg's Deven Bushong, who won bronze in welding sculpture at the state competition, compared SkillsUSA to "the trades version of FFA." Hong went a step further, saying it turns the trades into a sport.

"People are really doing something out here, and those are the things that really inspired me," said Brian Kipchemis, a gold medalist for Sandburg in medical math at the Illinois championships. "It challenged me to also work on my skills because other people are also doing something great. When you see other people do something good, you get inspired to do better yourself."

Spectators are free to walk throughout the floor during the competitions, watching students as they complete the tasks or projects in their category. On one side of the convention hall, you can check out a robotics event. Take a quick stroll to the other side and you can watch students build a tool shed from start to finish. The environment is stimulating for those interested in STEM careers.

"When we came last year, we could see how students were so proud of what they were learning and being part of this big gathering — this celebration — and seeing successful people who also went through this trade career pathway," Hong said. "It's a huge movement of the country saying that we need people who have technical skills, and that they make the nation strong."

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Due to the generosity of our Sandburg Foundation donors, students are achieving success and reaching their dreams of higher education.



To continue supporting the college's mission of providing all students with opportunities for success, visit sandburg.edu/givenow, scan the QR code, or contact the Sandburg Foundation at 309.341.5349 or foundation@sandburg.edu.

Photos from the annual scholarship reception below.







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