

together

EXPLORING WHAT CAN BE

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FALL 2017 NO. 11



COMMUNITY

[kə-'myü-nə-tē] noun

1. a group of people forming a smaller social unit within a larger one, and sharing a common interest, work, identity, location, etc.
2. society at large



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COMMUNITY

from the dean

Thank you for reading the Fall 2017 edition of the College of Social Sciences' Together newsletter! I am thrilled to highlight a few key activities in our college.

I recently started my third year as dean and welcomed my third cohort of new faculty to the college this August. This edition of Together profiles our seven new assistant professors: Darwyn Deyo (Economics), Gordon Douglas (Urban and Regional Planning), Yvonne Kwan (Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences), Leonard Lira (Political Science), Raymond March (Economics), Matthew Record (Political Science) and Elizabeth Sweet (Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences). Two additional new faculty members—Alberto García

(History), and Joanne Rondilla (Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences)—have one-year leaves of absence to complete projects at their previous institutions. They will be joining the college in August 2018, and will be profiled in the Fall 2018 Together. Including García and Rondilla, we expect nine new faculty members to join us next year. Most excitingly, four will be filling brand-new positions. One of SJSU's goals is to increase the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty members. We are happy that the College of Social Sciences is doing our part to achieve that goal!

Together also highlights the work of our continuing faculty. Last year's cohort of seven new faculty included three assistant professors who were selected as faculty in residence in the residence halls. In this issue, we follow up with them about their efforts in an innovative program to increase the sense of community among new students. We then conclude the faculty spotlight by examining the Department of Anthropology's annual "AnthROX" event to bring together faculty, staff, students and alumni.

The issue also includes an interview with alumna Wanda Hendrix, who established a scholarship to support undergraduate student travel. Her fund enabled three students to go on a spring break trip to study important sites of African American history and culture in Washington, D.C., and New York City. She was so excited about the powerful experience for the students that she decided to also go on the trip as part of the learning community.

The faculty and alumna in profiled in this issue are all passionate about building community at San José State University, and beyond. Indeed, faculty, staff and students throughout the College of Social Sciences embrace the mission of building stronger individual and group connections as an essential component of improving society, both locally and globally. Please see the back cover for information about how you can help us with this important work. Thank you for being our partners!

Walt Jacobs
Dean

Doctorates & Dining Hall Trays

Dorm life's the norm life for these faculty members



Faculty in Residence Nikki Yeboah, an assistant professor in Communication Studies, swipes into her residence tower in the quad. Yeboah works with the Black Scholars Community in Joe West Hall.

In addition to juggling her teaching schedule in the History Department, her research on late medieval British Isles and her two children, a 2 1/2-year-old daughter and a 7-month-old son, Kate Olson is also "looking after" more than 300 students in two towers of Campus Village this year.

As one of just a handful of FIRs (Faculty in Residence), Olson lives with her husband and children just steps away from the halls of Campus Village 2 in a two-bedroom apartment and eats several times a week in the dining hall.

She bakes for Halloween parties, cooks up pumpkin cheesecake for a Thanksgiving dinner for those stranded in the dorm and helps host film nights, lectures and workshops. When Olson applied with University Housing Services to be a FIR, she didn't know what

to expect, but she was attracted by the financial incentive—free housing and meals—and the prospect of having a closer relationship with students and a built-in community in a new town.

She got all that.

"It's been great, really," she says, from the private courtyard outside her apartment. "The students are interested and interactive in terms of the children. And it's a good balance of having privacy and then just being able to walk through the doors and engage with students."

The FIR concept is a new one. It launched in 2016 with nine faculty members in residence in the housing quad on the southeast corner of campus. Six of the SJSU faculty members in residence this year teach in the College of Social Sciences.



Faculty residing in the dormitory quad help build relationships and understanding between students and professors.

In addition to Olson, FIRs include Nikki Yeboah, an assistant professor in the Communication Studies Department; Matt Capriotti, an assistant professor in the Psychology Department; Elizabeth Weiss, a professor in the Anthropology Department; Steve Del Chiaro, a lecturer in the Psychology Department; and Matthew Record, a new assistant professor in the Political Science Department.

The program is designed to encourage social interaction between SJSU faculty members and students who live in campus housing. Some of it is formal—organized dinners, lectures, discussion groups and seminars. The rest is informal—sharing meals in the dining commons or chatting in the halls.

For Capriotti, that’s one of the easiest and most rewarding aspects of being a FIR.

“I hit the dining hall pretty frequently,” he says. The food is pretty good and it

allows him to have organic encounters with students, talking in line or at a shared table.

“I think when that happens, there’s more of a sense of we’re both in our homes and it’s more natural,” Capriotti says. “We all kind of exist here naturally. We’re not leading a double life.”

For Yeboah, she knew she was at home in the residence hall quad when she started going outside in her gym clothes with no self-consciousness. That ease with students has spilled over into her teaching.

“I’m much more casual in the classroom now,” she says. “Having a relationship outside the classroom, engaging with them outside the classroom, changes how I structure personal dynamics inside the classroom. I’m not scared of them seeing me as a human.”

While Olson is charged with looking after students on seven general coed floors, both Capriotti and Yeboah are

attached to themed communities as well as general floors.

Capriotti’s is Rainbow Village, a floor of Joe West Hall for LGBTQ students or LGBTQ allies. Capriotti helps organize events and field trips, such as a daylong field trip to LGBTQ historical sites in San Francisco. Last year, Rainbow Village residents marched in the Silicon Valley Pride parade, and then came back to Joe West Hall for pizza to talk about the meaning of pride in their lives.

In the Black Scholars Community, also in Joe West Hall, Yeboah has organized a field trip to Oakland focused on Black Panthers history and planned programs around the theme of social justice. Last year, she brought in a speaker to advise on how to be safer when in contact with police and the community watched Ava DuVernay’s documentary “13,” which

explores the history of racial inequality in the United States.

Afterward, Yeboah says, “There were tears and a lot of community building.”

In exchange for participating in the program, faculty members get rent-free housing on campus, which can take a lot of stress off a professor’s budget in the pricey San José housing market. And the residence halls are incredibly convenient for faculty, who otherwise often commute from communities outside of San José.

But the financial benefits are far from the thoughts of Social Sciences faculty as they reflect on the experience.

“I think one of the goals of the program is to demystify faculty members,” says Olson. That was probably accomplished when Olson walked the halls at night during finals week, handing out coffee, doughnuts, croissants and empanadas.

“That was a wonderful way to connect socially,” she says, “but then I was also able to ask them about how things were going in their classes.”



Kate Olson is in her second year in the hall.

Capriotti, too, has found living among students has given him new perspective on their lives, which has colored his teaching.

“It makes me more empathetic about things,” he says. “You understand how hard they work because you see it.”

Yeboah came to San José last year from Toronto—new city, new job, no friends.

“I didn’t know anyone here,” she says. But sharing a floor with other new faculty members gave her an instant social circle.

“Personally, it’s been great,” Yeboah says. “I’ve made friendships here that I don’t think I would have made. I’m very grateful that it gave me a social life that I wouldn’t have had.”

Yeboah can’t walk across campus now without running into someone from the quad who has attended an event she’s sponsored, seen her in the dining hall or knows her through the Black Scholars Community.

“It’s, ‘Hey!’ and then, ‘How are you doing?’ and that leads to checking in and finding out their issues and understanding them better,” she says. “One of the reasons I did this was that I wanted to get a sense of the student body—who they are. And seeing each other coming to and fro and saying ‘Hey’ is a natural way to have that relationship.” 🍌

One of the perks of being a Faculty in Residence—along with free housing and a quick walk to the office—is a cafeteria nearby.



Giving and Getting

Alumna sees her contribution open eyes and change lives



U.S. Rep. John Lewis, a Democrat from Georgia (center) took time to meet with the crew from SJSU on their trip to Washington, D.C. Photo: Michael Cheers

When Wanda Hendrix ('77 BA, '94 MPA) walks across campus, which she does more often than many 64-year-old alumnae, she picks up some extra energy from the web of twenty-somethings with their backpacks making their way to class.

She even likes the whir and clack of skateboards and the fact that girls are now using boards to zip around.

"I just love the energy of being here," Hendrix says. "I just like engaging with students and seeing where they're going."

That excitement carried Hendrix across the country to New York City and Washington, D.C., earlier this year as she accompanied 16 SJSU

students of color on an alternative education spring break trip organized by the African American Student Success Task Force.

Hendrix did more than just go along; she helped make the trip happen by pitching in to help cover the costs of three of the students with \$500 grants made from a scholarship fund she endowed three years ago shortly after she retired. (College of Social Sciences Dean Walt Jacobs helped another four students with \$500 each from the Dean's Scholarship Fund.)

Hendrix knows her \$25,000 endowment isn't going to build a new lecture hall or have her name adorn a building. But it's doing exactly what she hoped for when she looked at her finances after retirement and decided that was what she could



Wanda Hendrix

afford—helping some students who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity have a richer college experience.

Hendrix gave to San José State while she is still living, she says, "so I can see my scholarship making a difference. I can see my scholarship working now."

On the spring break trip, she definitely saw direct—and moving—results from her scholarships.

Hendrix, a fan of the Harlem Renaissance, pointed out historic buildings to students on a walking tour of Harlem. With the SJSU students, she sat in on a class in racial and social injustice at The City College of New York, took in the Cloisters and a Broadway show with them and then headed to the U.S. Capitol, where the high point of the week came with a visit to the office of Representative John Lewis, the Georgia Democrat who played historic roles in the Civil Rights Movement, chairing the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and helping to organize the 1963 March on Washington.

Lewis, despite a busy schedule, spent an hour talking about his experiences to the group—who all were representing in Spartan blue polo shirts—and signed copies of his memoir "Walking With the Wind."

Hendrix, the daughter of a postal worker and a homemaker who grew up in Compton, saw how travel could open eyes and minds and change lives.

"Some of them had never been on an airplane before," she says. "Some of the students had never been outside California. For them to go on this trip, to see these places, it's something that will always be embedded in their lives forever."

Meeting and spending an hour with Lewis, who stood shoulder to shoulder with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., "They will never, ever forget that."

Hendrix's education was spurred by her father, Ezra French, who wanted to attend college but found those doors closed to a black man in Wisconsin in the 1940s. He moved his family to Los Angeles, arriving in Compton with the fires of the Watts riots still smoldering, and took a job with the U.S. Postal Service.

"He encouraged his children to become educated," Hendrix said. And of her 14 siblings and stepsiblings, half have college degrees. It took Hendrix years after high school to enroll at SJSU. She first earned an associate's degree from Compton Junior College, then was recruited to attend UCLA. But she felt adrift there in large classes that lacked diversity. She lasted a year at UCLA and then moved to San José, where two of her high school friends were studying at SJSU.

She enrolled in 1976 and graduated a year and a half later. "I enjoyed the class sizes," she says. "And I enjoyed the diversity." Hendrix left San José State with a degree in sociology and thought that she might apply to law school or pursue a master's in social work. But she got a job in administration with the Criminal Justice Administration in San José and was off to the races on a three-decade career in government, most of it spent analyzing finances and managing budgets.

She worked in Santa Clara County, as well as the cities of Palo Alto and Hayward, and as a financial analyst for a semiconductor company before settling in at the East Bay Municipal Utility District in Oakland. She spent almost 20 years there and retired in 2013 from the position of treasury manager—the first woman and person of color to hold the job.

Along the way she returned to SJSU to work on a master's of public administration.

"It took me a long time to get my master's degree—6 1/2 years going nights and weekends," Hendrix says.

That MPA aided her career advancement and it also reconnected her to her Spartan roots. Many of her classes were taken alongside Diana Hunter, who at the time was president of the Alumni Association board of directors. Hunter encouraged Hendrix to apply for an open position on the board.

With a little coaxing, she did, and she has served on the board since, becoming its first African American president. She has also served on the Tower Foundation Board since its inception.

Hendrix hosts an annual reunion breakfast for black alumni, and she always encourages alumni to think of giving to the University if they can.

And, she says, "If you do it now, you can see it working now." 🌟

Photo: Michael Cheers



Seven New Faces, Lots of New Ideas

A former newspaper journalist, a one-time real estate appraiser and even a retired U.S. Army colonel are among the newest members of the College of Social Sciences faculty. Other new hires bring fresh ideas about urban guerilla planning, unspoken Cambodian trauma, the role the private market plays in drug safety and why girls' toys are pink.

Darwynn Deyo's

disappointing encounters with politicians as a reporter covering state government in Harrisburg, Pa., helped steer her toward graduate school to study economics.

"It was frustrating, being a journalist and being able to ask questions and know the kinds of things we should be focused on and have politicians give me 'politician speak' in return," says Deyo, a newly appointed assistant professor in the Department of Economics.



Realizing she could make more of an impact by helping to shape policy rather than just reporting on it, Deyo went to George Mason University for her Ph.D. She developed dual interests in labor economics and health economics (one dissertation topic focused on the impact of occupational licensing, which has become much more widespread in the U.S. in recent decades).

She's currently working with colleagues in analyzing a large sample of Medicare beneficiaries to discern the impact of tort reform on the utilization of medical services. They are trying to answer a deceptively simple question: If doctors order more tests to protect themselves from malpractice claims, do tort reform measures have an impact on these practices?

Deyo, who earned degrees in economics and international studies at St. Mary's College of California in Moraga, finds her journalistic training comes in handy in the classroom.

"I like to take my background as a journalist and transmit that expertise to the students to help improve their writing," she says. "I'm teaching them to think critically, how to ask a question and how to answer that question working with the tools they already have."

Deyo has participated in competitive Scottish Highland dancing since childhood and was elated to learn that there is a school of Highland dancing in San José. "Scottish festivals are fun," she says. 🌟

Most people assume the U.S. Food and Drug Administration determines whether pharmaceuticals are safe for human use, but in practice, physicians and pharmaceutical manufacturers often take the lead in determining how drugs are prescribed—and for what conditions.

Raymond March, a new assistant professor in the Department of Economics, studies the comparative roles played by public and private entities in the safe use of pharmaceuticals.

"If you know drugs are dangerous, how do you effectively prescribe them?" he asks. "Can private bodies uphold the Hippocratic oath, or do you need government? Those are the kinds of questions I'm trying to answer."

Often, March says, clinicians find new uses for a medication before the FDA develops a regulation. One example is aspirin. Starting in the 1950s, doctors who realized that it kept blood from clotting advised patients to take it to prevent heart attacks. The FDA approved its use to treat heart attacks in the 1990s and still hasn't approved a daily dose for preventive purposes, although it is widely used for that today.

It's also important to understand the incentives that drive particular clinical practices, March says. "I'm interested in the incentive structures," he says. "Is there an incentive regardless of the medical evidence?"

March, a Miami native, did his undergraduate work at Florida Gulf Coast University and earned his Ph.D. in economics at Texas Tech University. Now at San José State, he'd like to add some new course offerings, particularly in health economics and managerial economics.

Meanwhile, he's enjoying the move to the Bay Area. "I like it a lot better," he says. "The weather's nice and not everyone's on the farm. In Texas, I had a kid email and say, 'I can't take the final because I can't find the cows.'" 🌟



A few years back, **Matthew Record** had an unenviable ringside seat on the meltdown of the national housing market. The young real estate appraiser sometimes found himself entering repossessed homes that still contained the belongs of their recently evicted owners.

The Sayville, N.Y., native took a hiatus from his undergraduate studies to work as an appraiser a couple of years before the real estate market tanked. As economic conditions grew more dismal, he returned to school while working, graduating from Stony Brook University in 2011.

"The psychic toll of that became too much," says Record, who recently joined the College of Social Sciences faculty as an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science. "I got to see the actual people that it affected on a day-to-day basis."

The sobering experience—and his empathy for those who lost everything—prompted Record to decide to return to school for his graduate degree. It also influenced his decision to focus on housing policy and housing finance.

His research for a Ph.D. in public policy and management at Ohio State University examined bond-financed lending by housing finance agencies. Record was interested in how well those loans performed, and whether the loan servicing was better handled by the agencies themselves or outside contractors.

"Theory would suggest servicing loans could be contracted out to the private sector efficiently," Record says. "But the agencies that did not privatize outperformed agencies that did outsource servicing by quite a bit."

This semester, Record is teaching an introduction to political science class to undergraduates and a policy analysis and research methods class to graduate students. "I always had a sense that I would probably like teaching, but I really fell in love with it in Ohio," he says. "That's why I'm here." 🌟



Len Lira's undisguised admiration for his students is infectious.

"They're all earnest," says Lira, a recently retired Army colonel and newly appointed assistant professor of public administration in the Department of Political Science. "They're here for a reason. They have a part-time or a full-time job, and they're using the education they get from this school to make a better life for themselves."

The opportunity to mentor students, especially those who, like Lira himself, are first-generation college attendees, is a major motivator. "To see the light bulb go off and that 'aha' moment that the student gets—to me, that makes it all worth it," he says.

Lira comes to San José State following a 27-year military career. Upon graduation from Sam Houston State University, where he attended on a ROTC scholarship, he was commissioned as second lieutenant and assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C. He got his master's in public administration and an M.A. in international relations at Syracuse University and that led to an invitation to teach American politics at the U.S. Military Academy.

Lira next spent nearly three years serving back-to-back tours of duty in Iraq, followed by a stint teaching at the Army Command and General Staff College and then an appointment to run the NATO combined joint operations center in Afghanistan.

Lira resumed his graduate studies, earning a Ph.D. in public administration from the University of Kansas. He closed out his military career as the founding director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence at the Army University.

"The beautiful thing about public administration is it's very diverse," he says. "Research questions abound within the field, but my philosophy is not to do research for research's sake. I want to use it to teach with." 🌟



When her daughter was a baby, **Elizabeth Sweet** was startled to notice that toys tended to be heavily “gendered”—pink for girls, blue for boys.

“I didn’t remember toys being so segregated when I was growing up in the 1970s,” says Sweet, who recently was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences.

That observation inspired her sociology dissertation subject: a content analysis of thousands of toy advertisements in Sear’s catalogues from throughout the 20th century. Sweet wanted to understand how toys were marketed, as well as what ideas and beliefs about toys were embedded in the ads.

“My perception was correct: toys were much less gendered over the course of the 20th century than they are today,” Sweet says. “This idea of toys all having a gender classification is a relatively new historical phenomenon.”

Much of it has to do with the role played by marketers, she believes. “You can think of lots of different ways that marketers can classify and target,” Sweet says, “but they went straight to gender, and they did it in this very stereotypical way.”

Sweet grew up in Tijeras, N.M., the daughter of a physicist father and artist mother. She dropped out of college, spent most of her 20s working in low-wage jobs, and then returned to school to complete her bachelor’s degree at Oregon State University. “I had professors who said, ‘You should go to grad school and get a Ph.D. in sociology,’” she says. She took their advice and finished her graduate work at University of California, Davis, in 2013.

Sweet enjoys teaching statistics to undergraduates. “People think that’s weird and that I’m probably lying, but it’s true,” she says. “Most sociology students worry a lot about the math. My goal is always leave them feeling better about it than they came.” 🌟



Spray painting bike lanes under cover of darkness, filling potholes and even removing a bus stop—what some call “DIY urbanism”—has been the topic of **Gordon Douglas’** research for the past several years.

His inquiry into what happens when citizens take urban planning into their own hands forms “The Help Yourself City,” soon to be published by Oxford University Press.

“Everything I looked at was totally unauthorized and usually illegal,” says Douglas, a new assistant professor in the Department of Urban & Regional Planning and also director of the department’s Institute for Metropolitan Studies.

As a sociologist, Douglas trains a slightly different lens on urban planning and, he says, “The angle that my book takes is pretty critical.”

Guerrilla planning can cause headaches for governments because it disrupts professional efforts and can create unintended liability. By definition, it also reflects the concerns and aesthetics of one person or group—often educated white people or the so-called creative class—at the expense of others.

“I like to look at this line of where one person’s improvement becomes another person’s vandalism,” Douglas says.

Douglas, who was raised in Davis, Calif., has always been fascinated by cities, which is partly why he chose the University of Southern California in urban Los Angeles for his undergraduate education.

“I chose USC without a car,” he says. “I was totally nerding out on mass transportation and urbanism, even as an undergraduate.”

He got dual master’s degrees in global communications from USC and the London School of Economics, and then decided to do a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Chicago in the pursuit of a career studying urbanism.

A research post-doc at New York University involved examining rebuilding strategies post-Hurricane Sandy and led to a job as interim director of NYU’s Institute for Public Knowledge, a social science research center. 🌟



When you grow up in a household where your parents’ traumatic past is shrouded in silence, how does that trauma affect you?

Yvonne Kwan, a new assistant professor of Asian American Studies, uses that lens to focus on the experiences of the children of Cambodian refugees.

She calls it “the silence, the not-knowing” that often permeates the households of refugees who have experienced violence and severe trauma.

In the case of Cambodian genocide during the Vietnam War, adults were scarred by the experiences but reluctant to talk about what they lived through or share their feelings with their American children.

“The surviving generation has the traumatic experience and they don’t talk about it because they want to forget, or they want to protect their children or they’ve blocked out memories,” Kwan says. “The children, they grow up knowing something’s up—that their parents are different—but they don’t know why.”

The passing on of that experience is central to Kwan’s research of how the trauma experienced by one generation affects the generation that follows—especially when parents don’t speak about it.

While her research took her into the lives of Cambodian Americans across California, Kwan’s interest in the topic was born at home. Her boyfriend since she was 14—and now her husband—is Cambodian American and she saw firsthand how his parents were shaped by genocide in their country.

Kwan, who has degrees from University of California, San Diego, UCLA and University of California, Santa Cruz, collected ethnographic data and took lengthy histories from 27 Cambodian Americans between the ages of 18 and 32 for her Ph.D. dissertation. She is working on a book about those second-generation effects—the “afterlife” of trauma. 🌟



Anthropology is often defined as the study of humans in society. So it was natural that Roberto González one day decided to host a social gathering of anthropologists (and their friends).

“I thought it would be nice to have some kind of event where we could invite people who are not just current students and faculty, but kind of extend our reach outward,” says González, professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology.

“In talking with the other faculty members, we came up with this idea of a springtime event where we would reconnect with people who had an historical connection with our department who may have become distant over time.”

The third annual AnthROX (a play on the name of Anthrax, the 1980s thrash metal band), set for next April at Flames Eatery & Bar in downtown San José, will feature lively TEDx-style research presentations from students, games, raffles, food, musical entertainment and ample opportunity for conversation and reconnection.

The event was conceived with the help of Professor A.J. Faas, who had encountered a similar celebration at his graduate institution, González said. The idea was to bring together donors, alumni of the graduate program who might have fallen out of touch, emeritus faculty and “friends of anthropology” who have supported the department in various ways.

“As chair, one thing I’ve been committed to is increasing that sense of community in the department,” González says. Another benefit of the event is the opportunity to highlight the continuing research of emeritus faculty.

“What’s really interesting about our emeritus faculty is they’ve become more productive since leaving the classroom,” he says. “They’ve just had incredible careers post-retirement.”

The 2017 AnthROX also celebrated a 50th anniversary—the undergraduate major in anthropology was first offered at San José State in 1967.

“We call the event a celebration of anthropology,” González says. “As one person said, ‘This isn’t a fundraising event; it’s a friend-raising event.’”

What could be more anthropological than that? 🌟

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On the Cover

Matthew Capriotti, a member of the Department of Psychology faculty, uses his meal card in the dining hall.

Capriotti and other members of the CoSS faculty are “Faculty in Residence,” living in the quad and helping to build bridges between faculty members and students.

We're in this together

Students, faculty and staff in the College of Social Sciences work every day to build community on campus and to link and collaborate with communities outside campus boundaries.

You can contribute to furthering our community by helping to fund some of our current projects.

- + Help sponsor a student's social impact internship
- + Support an endowed Professor of South Bay Studies
- + Invest in the Environmental Studies Sustainable Agriculture Garden

Whether you designate your annual gift toward a particular project, give to one of the other funds in the College of Social Sciences or establish your own endowment, you will help our students become the citizens we need them to be.

together

Fall 2017

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