



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

Assessment • Planning • Interventions

University of
San Francisco

Assessment of Climate for
Learning, Living, &
Working

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Executive Summary

History of the Project

The University of San Francisco (USF) affirms that diversity, equity, and inclusion are crucial to the intellectual vitality of the campus community and that they engender academic engagement where teaching, working, learning, and living take place in pluralistic communities of mutual respect. Free exchange of different ideas and viewpoints in supportive environments encourages students, faculty, and staff to develop the critical thinking and citizenship skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

The University of San Francisco (USF) also is committed to fostering a caring community that provides leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world. As noted in USF's mission statement, "The university will distinguish itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice.¹" To better understand the campus climate, the senior administration at USF recognized the need for a comprehensive tool that would provide campus climate metrics for the experiences and perceptions of its students, faculty, and staff.

In summer 2016, the Campus Climate Working Group (CCWG) formed. The Campus Climate Working Group was composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. During fall 2017, USF conducted a comprehensive survey of students, faculty, and staff to develop a better understanding of the learning, living, and working environment on campus. USF contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting (R&A) to conduct a campus-wide study entitled, "University of San Francisco Assessment of Climate for Learning, Living, and Working." Data gathered via reviews of relevant USF literature, campus focus groups, and a campus-wide survey addressing the experiences and perceptions of various constituent groups will be presented at community forums during spring 2018, from which USF will develop and complete two or three action items.

¹<https://www.usfca.edu/about-usf/who-we-are/vision-mission>

Project Design and Campus Involvement

The conceptual model used as the foundation for USF's assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith et al. (1997) and modified by Rankin (2003). A power and privilege perspective informs the model, one grounded in critical theory, which establishes that power differentials, both earned and unearned, are central to all human interactions (Brookfield, 2005). Unearned power and privilege are associated with membership in dominant social groups (A. Johnson, 2005) and influence systems of differentiation that reproduce unequal outcomes. USF's assessment was the result of a comprehensive process to identify the strengths and challenges of campus climate, with a specific focus on the distribution of power and privilege among differing social groups. This report provides an overview of the results of the campus-wide survey.

The Campus Climate Working Group collaborated with R&A to develop the survey instrument. Together, they implemented participatory and community-based processes to review tested survey questions from the R&A question bank and developed a survey instrument for USF that would reveal the various dimensions of power and privilege that shape the campus experience. In the first phase, R&A conducted 16 focus groups, which were composed of 109 participants (48 students; 61 faculty and staff). In the second phase, the Campus Climate Working Group and R&A used data from the focus groups to co-construct questions for the campus-wide survey. The final USF survey queried various campus constituent groups about their experiences and perceptions regarding the academic environment for students, the workplace environment for faculty and staff, employee benefits, sexual harassment and sexual violence, racial and ethnic identity, gender identity and gender expression, sexual identity, accessibility and disability services, and other topics.

Four thousand four hundred eighty-six (4,486) people completed the survey. In the end, the assessment was the result of a comprehensive process to identify the strengths and challenges of campus climate, with a specific focus on the distribution of power and privilege among differing social groups at USF.

USF Participants

USF community members completed four thousand four hundred eighty-six (4,486) surveys for an overall response rate of 34%. Only surveys that were at least 50% completed were included in

the final data set for analyses.² Forty-five percent ($n = 2,032$) of the sample were Undergraduate Students, 26% ($n = 1,185$) were Graduate Students, 15% ($n = 673$) were Staff members, and 13% ($n = 596$) were Faculty members. Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. The percentages offered in Table 1 are based on the numbers of respondents in the sample (n) for each demographic characteristic.³

Table 1 .USF Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Gender identity	Woman	2,976	66.3
	Man	1,329	29.6
	Transpectrum	147	3.3
	Missing/Unknown	34	0.8
Racial/ethnic identity	Other Person of Color	185	4.1
	Asian/Asian American/South Asian	1,021	22.8
	Latin@/Chican@/Hispanic	583	13.0
	Black/African American	260	5.8
	White	1,672	37.3
	Multiracial	676	15.1
	Missing/Unknown	89	2.0
Sexual identity	LGBQ	862	19.2
	Heterosexual	3,448	76.9
	Missing/Unknown	176	3.9
Citizenship status	U.S. Citizen-Birth	3,474	77.4
	U.S. Citizen-Naturalized	435	9.7
	Not U.S. Citizen/ Multiple Citizenships	551	12.3
	Missing/Unknown	26	0.6
Disability status	Single Disability	412	9.2
	No Disability	3,843	85.7
	Multiple Disabilities	175	3.9
	Missing/Unknown	56	1.2

²Fifty surveys were removed because the respondents did not complete at least 50% of the survey, and 20 duplicate submissions were removed. Surveys were also removed from the data file if the respondent did not provide consent ($n = 73$). No responses were removed because they were judged to have been problematic (i.e., the respondent did not complete the survey in good faith).

³The total n for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

Table 1 .USF Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Religious/spiritual affiliation	Christian Affiliation	1,793	40.0
	Other Religious/ Spiritual Affiliation	461	10.3
	No Religious/Spiritual Affiliation including Not Listed	1,833	40.9
	Multiple Religious/ Spiritual Affiliations	264	5.9
	Missing/Unknown	135	3.0
Position status	Undergraduate Student	2,032	45.3
	Graduate Student	1,185	26.4
	Faculty including Tenured, Tenure- Track, and Term Faculty	363	8.1
	Adjunct Faculty	233	5.2
	Staff	673	15.0

Note: The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

Key Findings – Areas of Strength

1. High levels of comfort with the climate at USF

Climate is defined as the “current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential.”⁴ The level of comfort experienced by faculty, staff, and students is one indicator of campus climate.

- 77% (*n* = 3,444) of survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at USF.
- 70% (*n* = 866) of Faculty and Staff respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their departments/work units.
- 82% (*n* = 3,130) of Student and Faculty respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their classes.

⁴Rankin & Reason (2008)

2. Faculty Respondents – Positive attitudes about faculty work

Tenured and Tenure-Track

- 71% ($n = 192$) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the criteria for tenure and promotion were clear.
- 88% ($n = 238$) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that teaching was valued by USF.

Non-Tenure-Track

- 76% ($n = 243$) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that teaching was valued by USF.
- 72% ($n = 227$) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that service was valued by USF.

All Faculty

- 87% ($n = 506$) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by students in the classroom.
- 72% ($n = 419$) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that USF provided them with resources to pursue professional development (e.g., conferences, materials, research and course design, travel).

3. Staff Respondents – Positive attitudes about staff work

- 85% ($n = 567$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by coworkers in their department and 79% ($n = 524$) felt valued by their direct supervisor.
- 81% ($n = 539$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their direct supervisor was supportive of their taking leave (e.g., vacation, parental, personal, short-term disability).
- 75% ($n = 500$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that USF provided them with resources to pursue training/professional development opportunities.
- 80% ($n = 536$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that health insurance benefits were competitive.

4. Student Respondents – Positive attitudes about academic experiences

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.⁵ Research also supports the pedagogical value of a diverse student body and faculty for improving learning outcomes.⁶ Attitudes toward academic pursuits are one indicator of campus climate.

- 80% ($n = 2,554$) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by USF faculty, 74% ($n = 2,358$) felt valued by USF staff, and 84% ($n = 2,677$) felt valued by USF faculty in the classroom.
- 71% ($n = 2,272$) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the campus climate at USF encouraged free and open discussion of difficult topics.
- 75% ($n = 2,381$) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had faculty whom they perceived as role models.
- 72% ($n = 846$) of Graduate Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they felt they had adequate access to advising.
- Most Graduate Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their advisor/chair (75%, $n = 881$), department/program faculty members (83%, $n = 958$), and department/program staff members (82%, $n = 958$) responded to their emails, calls, or voicemails in a prompt manner.
- 78% ($n = 913$) of Graduate Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they felt comfortable sharing their professional goals with their advisor.

5. Student Respondents Perceived Academic Success

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the scale, *Perceived Academic Success*, derived from Question 13 on the survey. Analyses using this scale revealed:

- A significant difference existed in the overall test for means for Student respondents by sexual identity, income status, and citizenship status on *Perceived Academic Success*.

⁵Pascarella & Terenzini (2005)

⁶Hale (2004); Harper & Hurtado (2007); Harper & Quaye (2004)

Examples of Findings

- LGBQ Undergraduate Student respondents' scores indicated lower *Perceived Academic Success* than Heterosexual Undergraduate Student respondents. The same was found for Graduate Student respondents.
- High-Income Graduate Student respondents and Middle-Income Graduate Student respondents both had greater *Perceived Academic Success* than Low-Income Graduate Student respondents.
- U.S. Citizen-Birth Graduate Student respondents had greater *Perceived Academic Success* than Not-U.S. Citizen Graduate Student respondents.

Key Findings – Opportunities for Improvement

1. Members of several constituent groups indicated that they experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.⁷ Research also underscores the relationship between workplace discrimination and subsequent productivity.⁸ The survey requested information on experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

- 19% ($n = 865$) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.⁹

○ Most of the exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct was based on ethnicity, gender/gender identity, and position status.

Differences based on position status, gender identity, and racial identity

- By position status, a higher percentage of Faculty respondents (29%, $n = 171$) and Staff respondents (28%, $n = 188$) than Undergraduate Student respondents (17%, $n = 348$) noted they believed that they had experienced this conduct, while the

⁷Aguirre & Messineo (1997); Flowers & Pascarella (1999); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005); Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora (2011)

⁸Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley (2008); Waldo (1998)

⁹The literature on microaggressions is clear that this type of conduct has a negative influence on people who experience the conduct, even if they feel at the time that it had no impact (Sue, 2010; Yosso et al., 2009).

proportion of Graduate Student respondents (13%, $n = 158$) was statistically lower than the other three groups.

- Of those respondents who noted that they had experienced this conduct, all groups indicated that the conduct was based on their position status: Staff respondents (45%, $n = 84$), Faculty respondents (30%, $n = 51$), Graduate Student respondents (16%, $n = 25$), and Undergraduate Student respondents (7%, $n = 25$).
- By gender identity, 30% ($n = 44$) of Transspectrum respondents, 20% ($n = 592$) of Women respondents, and 16% ($n = 214$) of Men respondents indicated that they had experienced this conduct.
 - A higher percentage of Transspectrum respondents (73%, $n = 32$) than Women respondents (25%, $n = 146$) than Men respondents (13%, $n = 27$) who had experienced this conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their gender identity.
- By racial identity, a higher percentage of Respondents of Color (22%, $n = 227$) and White respondents (20%, $n = 333$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct than Asian/Asian American/South Asian respondents (14%, $n = 142$), with Multiracial respondents (19%, $n = 125$) not being statistically different from the other groups.
 - A higher percentage of Respondents of Color (43%, $n = 98$), Asian/Asian American/South Asian respondents (37%, $n = 53$), and Multiracial respondents (33%, $n = 41$) who had experienced this conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their ethnicity compared with White respondents (8%, $n = 28$).

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct at USF. Four hundred one (401) respondents elaborated on experiences with this conduct. Seven themes emerged from all responses: Faculty respondents discussed disrespectful and belittling actions by fellow USF employees, and various acts of discrimination that they had either witnessed or experienced as a faculty member at USF. Staff respondents elaborated on disrespectful and belittling behavior directed at them by faculty and administrators, as well as

discriminatory remarks or acts of discrimination based on individuals' gender. Student respondents described being the recipient of or witnessing various acts of harassment and/or discrimination based on race/ethnicity and/or disability status. Student respondents also elaborated on their negative experiences of reporting hostile conduct to USF officials or through USF channels.

2. Several constituent groups indicated that they were less comfortable with the overall campus climate, workplace climate, and classroom climate.

Prior research on campus climate has focused on the experiences of faculty, staff, and students associated with historically underserved social/community/affinity groups (e.g., women, People of Color, people with disabilities, first-generation students, and veterans).¹⁰ Several groups at USF indicated that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, workplace, and classroom.

Examples of Findings for Overall Climate at USF

- 31% ($n = 412$) of Men respondents, 23% ($n = 679$) of Women respondents, and 16% ($n = 23$) of Transspectrum respondents felt “very comfortable” with the overall climate.
- 29% ($n = 484$) of White respondents, compared with 23% ($n = 237$) of Asian/Asian American/South Asian respondents and 22% ($n = 221$) of Other Respondents of Color were “very comfortable” with the overall climate at USF (Multiracial respondents did not significantly differ), while a higher percentage of Asian/Asian American/South Asian respondents (59%, $n = 602$) than White respondents (50%, $n = 830$), Other Respondents of Color (50%, $n = 516$), and Multiracial respondents (51%, $n = 343$) were “comfortable” with the overall climate.
- 21% ($n = 179$) of LGBQ respondents compared with 27% ($n = 917$) of Heterosexual respondents felt “very comfortable” with the overall climate.
- A higher percentage of Respondents with a Single Disability (14%, $n = 57$) and Respondents with Multiple Disabilities (17%, $n = 29$), compared with

¹⁰Harper & Hurtado (2007); Hart & Fellabaum (2008); Rankin (2003); Rankin & Reason (2005); Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart (2008)

Respondents with No Disability (7%, $n = 252$), were “uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable” with the overall climate.

- A larger percentage of High-Income Student respondents (31%, $n = 356$) than Low-Income Student respondents (25%, $n = 156$) or Middle-Income Student respondents (23%, $n = 296$) was “very comfortable” with the overall climate.

Examples of Findings for Department/Program and Work Unit Climate

- 14% ($n = 71$) of Salary Staff respondents compared with 5% ($n = 8$) of Hourly Staff respondents felt “uncomfortable” with the climate in their department/program or work unit.
- 26% ($n = 197$) of Women Faculty and Staff respondents compared with 37% ($n = 166$) of Men Faculty and Staff respondents felt “very comfortable” with the climate in their department/program or work unit (Transpectrum Faculty and Staff respondents were not significantly different).

Examples of Findings for Classroom Climate

- 26% ($n = 199$) of LGBTQ Faculty and Student respondents compared with 31% ($n = 909$) of Heterosexual Faculty and Student respondents were “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- 9% ($n = 33$) of Faculty and Student respondents with a Single Disability and 8% ($n = 12$) of Faculty and Student Respondents with Multiple Disabilities, compared with 4% ($n = 120$) of Faculty and Student Respondents with No Disability, were “uncomfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- 32% ($n = 379$) of High-Income Student respondents compared with 28% ($n = 358$) of Middle-Income Student respondents and 26% ($n = 164$) of Low-Income Student respondents felt “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.

3. Faculty and Staff Respondents – Seriously Considered Leaving USF

- 48% ($n = 281$) of Faculty respondents and 59% ($n = 398$) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving USF in the past year.
 - 54% of those Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of limited opportunities for advancement ($n = 213$). Other reasons

included cost of living in the Bay Area (43%, $n = 171$) and low salary/pay rate (41%, $n = 164$).

○ 38% of those Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of cost of living in the Bay Area ($n = 107$) and 34% each because of increased workload ($n = 97$) and/or limited opportunities for advancement ($n = 94$).

4. Staff Respondents – Challenges with work-life issues

- 26% ($n = 171$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that staff opinions were valued by USF faculty.
- 64% ($n = 429$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that a hierarchy existed within staff positions that allowed some voices to be valued more than others.
- 36% ($n = 242$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that staff salaries were competitive.
- 40% ($n = 264$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that child care benefits were competitive.
- 39% ($n = 260$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that USF policies (e.g., FMLA) were fairly applied across USF.
- 37% ($n = 247$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the performance evaluation process was productive.
- 20% ($n = 135$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that clear procedures existed on how they could advance at USF.
- 38% ($n = 251$) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt positive about their career opportunities at USF.

Staff respondents elaborated on their perceptions of the work-place climate at USF.

Several themes emerged from the responses including: negative opinions of performance evaluations, excessive workload, the presence of a hierarchy resulting in some staff voices being prioritized over others, insufficient staff salaries and vacation day accrual, a lack of advancement opportunities at USF, and a lack of job security at USF.

5. Faculty Respondents – Challenges with faculty work

- 39% ($n = 226$) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for tenure-track faculty were competitive and 38% ($n = 221$) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for adjunct professors were competitive. 20% ($n = 112$) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the child care subsidy was competitive.
- 25% ($n = 147$) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that USF provided adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance (e.g., child care, wellness services, elder care, housing location assistance, and transportation).
- 36% ($n = 211$) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by USF senior administrators (e.g., dean, vice president, provost). 24% ($n = 64$) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that faculty opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators. 29% ($n = 93$) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators, and 33% ($n = 104$) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their opinions were taken seriously by tenured/tenure-track faculty.
- 52% ($n = 142$) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that tenure standards/promotion standards were applied equally to faculty in their school/college.
- 37% ($n = 118$) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the criteria used for contract renewal were clear and 22% ($n = 71$) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they were applied equally to all positions.
- 18% ($n = 58$) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had job security.

Faculty respondents elaborated on statements regarding their perceptions of work-life balance at USF. Two themes emerged from the Faculty respondents’ comments: the inadequacy of their compensation in relation to the cost of living in the Bay Area, and the lack of job security associated with their position or their perception that their job security, even in association with a tenured/tenure-track position, can be precarious. In addition, Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents elaborated on negative

perceptions of senior leadership, a disregard for faculty input in various decision-making processes, criteria for promotion and tenure and application of the criteria in practice, and the burden of faculty service expectations. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents commented on the array of work requirements they experience in addition to their teaching expectations, and the lack of job security they experience.

6. A small, but meaningful, percentage of respondents experienced unwanted sexual conduct.

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a substantial issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the USF survey requested information regarding sexual assault.

- 8% ($n = 347$) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct while at USF.
 - 1% ($n = 48$) of respondents experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting).
 - 2% ($n = 71$) of respondents experienced stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls).
 - 6% ($n = 254$) of respondents experienced sexual interaction (e.g., cat-calling, repeated sexual advances, sexual harassment).
 - 2% ($n = 106$) of respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g. fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent).
- Respondents identified USF students, current or former dating/intimate partners, acquaintances/friends, and strangers as sources of unwanted sexual contact/conduct.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted sexual contact/conduct. The rationales cited for not reporting these incidents were the belief that nothing would be done and/or that they would not be taken seriously, perceiving the events to have been inconsequential, and/or blaming themselves for what happened.

Conclusion

USF climate findings¹¹ were consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country, based on the work of R&A Consulting.¹² For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” A similar percentage (77%) of USF respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at USF. Twenty percent to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At USF, a slightly lower percentage of respondents (19%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. The results also paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.¹³

USF's climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and addresses USF's mission and goals. While the findings may guide decision-making in regard to policies and practices at USF, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus's environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating additional action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the USF community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. USF, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime position to actualize its commitment to promote an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

¹¹Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

¹²Rankin & Associates Consulting (2016)

¹³Guiffrida, Gouveia, Wall, & Seward (2002); Harper & Hurtado (2007); Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart (2006); Silverschanz et al.(2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

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