

The Weekly

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Nikias delivers inaugural annual faculty address to HSC

By Katie Neith

USC President C. L. Max Nikias affirmed that faculty are the foundation of all academic excellence and the cornerstone of all of the university's aspirations, in his inaugural annual faculty address on the Health Sciences Campus Feb. 9.

"I'm ever mindful that all excellence in the life of the mind and body and spirit all begin and end with you, the faculty," Nikias said.

Nikias was introduced by president of the faculty and professor of radiology, clinical pharmacy and biomedical engineering, Peter Conti, who called him "an energetic leader, innovator and scholar."

The president's energy was obvious as he updated attendees—those both physically present in the Aresty Auditorium and others watching via webcast at Children's Hospital Los Angeles—on recent developments that he said will allow USC to reach "undisputed elite status."

Nikias focused on the beautification plan for the

Health Sciences Campus and construction of the new Soto Building, which will house a gym, a café and the medical school's Department of Preventive Medicine. He also emphasized that the university plans to upgrade athletics facilities,

expand housing options for all students, provide a new student health center and move the University Club to a new historic location at the University Park Campus.

On a community level, Nikias said, "There are many ways in which we are trying

to weave USC into the very fabric of the larger Southern California community."

He cited the Festival of Books, which will be held at USC this spring, after 15 years at UCLA, as one prime example.

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USC President C. L. Max Nikias (right) chats with Vaughn Starnes, Distinguished Professor and chair of the Keck School's Department of Surgery and H. Russell Smith Foundation Chair for Cardiovascular Thoracic Research, before his address to the faculty Feb. 9.

**'I'm ever mindful
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**—USC President
C. L. Max Nikias**

USC hospitals push GNC campaign over the top

By Eddie North-Hager and Tania Chatila

More USC staff and faculty donated more money than ever to ring up the most successful Good Neighbors Campaign on record. But it was the generosity of the Trojan Family's newest members—USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital—that put the campaign over the top.

Employees of the two USC-owned hospitals raised \$75,000 for the 2010 Good Neighbors Campaign and hospital administrators matched that contribution with an additional \$75,000 organizational gift. The total hospitals pledge of \$150,000 gave the campaign the push it needed to exceed its goal, raising a total of \$1.38 million.

"We are extremely grateful to USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital for their generous donation to this very important cause," said Tom Sayles, vice president for Government and Civic Engagement at USC. "This helped us ensure that we surpassed our goal of raising \$1.3 million in 2010—our highest tally ever for the Good Neighbors Campaign. It is the collaborative effort of everyone at this University that continues to propel USC's civic engagement to new heights each year. We appreciate the whole-hearted support of our colleagues at the USC hospitals for helping to make that happen."

The contributions came just before the winter break, after the public push for donations had already closed. At that point, the campaign was still a bit shy of its goal.

Hospital administrators said the donation was a perfect way to give back to the area around USC.

"Our decision to match our employee contribution seemed only fitting when considering the true meaning of the USC Good Neighbors Campaign," said hospitals

See **GNC**, page 3

USC commences search for new senior vice president for health

A national search for a senior vice president for health is under way following an announcement from President C. L. Max Nikias in a Feb. 2 memorandum.

This new senior-level leader will oversee clinical elements of USC's academic medical center, Nikias said, "while ensuring that the care we provide in a range of

specialties—from the extremely complex medical cases to primary care for the entire family—continues to be at the highest possible level of excellence, and uses the most effective methods of treatment and attention in all our interactions with patients."

The senior vice president for health will be responsible for

strengthening and expanding USC's centers of clinical excellence and helping to recruit additional outstanding physicians to the hospitals and faculty practices, while maximizing the impact of the entire clinical operation: USC University Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital and the

See **HEALTH**, page 3

USC duo named to National Academy of Engineering

By Gloria Hayes

Mark S. Humayun, professor of ophthalmology, cell and neurobiology and biomedical engineering, the inaugural holder of the Cornelius J. Pings Chair of Biomedical Sciences and an elected member of the Institute of Medicine; and Aristides A. G. Requicha, a computer scientist, electrical engineer and Gordon S. Marshall Professor of Engineering at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, have been elected members of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE).

Humayun and Requicha are among 35 academics elected this year. The Class of 2011 consists of a total of 68 members.

Membership in the academy is the highest professional distinction that can be accorded an engineer. Members are elected to the academy by their peers for having distinguished themselves in research, technical positions and leadership in industry, government and academia.



Mark S. Humayun



Aristides A. G. Requicha

"We are extremely proud of the achievements of these two deserving and extraordinarily talented faculty members. Election to the NAE is an ultimate acknowledgement of their outstanding contributions to engineering," said Yannis C. Yortsos, dean of USC Viterbi. This is the third time since

2008 that two of the school's faculty have been elected in the same cycle, placing the school among only a handful of academic institutions (only six in this year's elections) with such a distinction.

Humayun holds joint appointments at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the Doheny Eye Institute and USC Viterbi. He directs the National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center on Bio-Mimetic Electronics Systems. He also directs the Department of Energy-funded artificial retina project.

Humayun's research focuses on the treatment of

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USC pharmacology symposium attracts experts from across nation

By Kukla Vera

Although the quest to identify new therapeutics is a huge undertaking, the cutting-edge methods of getting there are on a molecular scale.

Such was the consensus at the “Drug Design and Molecular Pharmacology” symposium, presented on Feb. 9 by the School of Pharmacy’s Department of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

At the event, six outstanding researchers from across the United States came together and shared their experiences of searching for drug candidates and developing therapies from simple molecular experiments in the lab, putting them through clinical trials and finally, implementing them in medical practice.

Doris Benbrook, Shaomeng Wang, and Ruiwen Zhang, all spoke about molecular targeting. Benbrook, a researcher from the University of Oklahoma, emphasized the need to think 3-dimensionally about biological targets, as the molecules identified for therapeutic targeting in a given disease often communicate with dozens of other molecules in cells.

Wang, from the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center, expanded on Benbrook’s ideas, speaking about his efforts to target the interactions between proteins. He explained that the more specific the



Doctoral student Melissa Millard (center) talks with conference presenter Shaomeng Wang (left), of the University of Michigan, and conference organizer Nouri Neamati, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

‘From day one, our goal is to do science that benefits patients.’

—Shaomeng Wang, of the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center

targeting, the greater the efficacy and the fewer the side effects. As a founder of two start-up companies and having multiple compounds currently in clinical trials, Wang further discussed how his lab concentrates efforts on designing compounds for particularly difficult cancer targets.

“From day one, our goal is to do science that benefits patients,” said Wang.

Wang’s focus on specificity was reinforced by Zhang, from Texas Tech University, who spoke about his research dealing with the p53-MDM2 protein.

Zhang is searching for compounds to target this particular protein in the

development of anti-cancer treatments.

Dale Mierke, of Dartmouth College, detailed his work on new screening methods for a class of cell receptors that are in every tissue of the body and are a critical element in cell signaling. Next up was a talk titled “Drug-induced hearing loss: Fishing for Answers” by Julian Simon, from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Simon uses the zebrafish to screen for drugs that can prevent tumors in cells without diminishing efficacy.

The concluding talk of the day was offered by C. Patrick Reynolds, from Texas Tech University. Reynolds discussed his drug delivery

work focusing on fat-soluble drugs. These are typically extremely effective against certain tumors; however their insolubility in water makes them very difficult to deliver in adequate concentrations. Reynolds described his “lipid glove,” a delivery method designed to overcome this limitation.

The event was attended by some 80 students, faculty and researchers.

“It was an honor to host so many experts in the field,” said Associate Professor Nouri Neamati, who organized the event. “This was a great opportunity for the USC community to hear about cutting-edge research in drug design and delivery.”

NIKIAS: ‘Let us write together, the most glorious chapter in USC’s history’

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To illustrate the teamwork and community partnerships that will be necessary to take USC to the next level, Nikias praised a recent award that was developed by Keck researchers and includes numerous disciplines at the

university and organizations in Los Angeles.

“Our faculty understand that success requires building bridges across our two campuses,” he said. “This led to USC winning the massive \$57 million Clinical and Translational Science Award

from the National Institutes of Health.”

Nikias also focused a major part of his speech on the new USC strategic plan, which will guide the investments and energies of academic leaders, deans and the faculty.

Part of the plan is a

commitment to recruit “world’s best faculty to USC,” particularly in the areas of research in the life sciences and clinical health practice.

“The challenge will be to create a new culture—one that’s collaborative and one that allows our academic medical enterprise to be truly academic,” said Nikias.

He said the newly created position of a senior vice president for health will help “to build the single best academic medical center—not just in the Los Angeles area, but also for the Pacific Rim.” Nikias continued, “With pride in our recent successes, we will continue to develop all of the faculty here and help everyone to succeed.”

To achieve undisputed elite status requires that USC achieve a “critical mass of faculty superstars,” he said, noting that while USC currently has many world-class scholarly and creative faculty, it needs more. Nikias called for the recruitment of “revolutionaries who will be remembered alongside you

for changing their field and changing society.”

Referencing the success of universities surrounding the Atlantic in the recent past, he said, “I believe as the center of gravity shifts, increasingly to the Pacific, we will need a new enlightenment—one specific to the needs of our age. USC has been designed and built by great women and men ... for this very sort of moment.”

He said the university is poised to achieve a great level of influence on a global scale and the faculty has a great opportunity to “take USC to the mountaintop of undisputedly elite universities.”

Nikias concluded, “It is a wonderful destiny for a dedicated faculty of any university, but indeed it is an especially remarkable destiny for this faculty, at this moment in USC’s history. Let us move forward, together, with purpose and determination and passion. Let us write together, the most glorious chapter in USC’s history.”

The Weekly

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Associate Senior Vice President, Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing: Jane Brust

Executive Director of Communications: Ina Fried

Assistant Director of Publications: Sara Reeve

Editor: Jon Nalick

Contributors: Ryan Ball, Eva Blaauw, Tania Chatila, Carol Matthieu, Katie Neith, Leslie Ridgeway and Imelda Valenzuela

Senior Vice President, University Relations: Martha Harris



Phone: 323-442-2830 Fax: 323-442-2832

E-mail: hscwkly@usc.edu

Web: theweekly.usc.edu

RSS: <http://www.usc.edu/hscw>

Erin Quinn steps down from Keck School admissions post

By Jon Nalick
Erin Quinn, associate dean for admissions and educational affairs for the Keck School of Medicine, stepped down from her administrative position earlier this month. Quinn, who joined USC as an administrator in the Department of Family Medicine in 1989 and was named assistant professor of family medicine in 1990, later acquired additional administrative duties as associate dean of women in 1993 and associate dean for admissions and educational affairs in 1998.

She was also director and core professor for the Baccalaureate/M.D. Program—a collaborative education program between the College of Letters, Arts and Science and the Keck School of Medicine—from 1994 to 2010. Quinn, who remains on the Keck School faculty as a professor of family medicine, is stepping down from her other posts to help create a community-based, multi-specialty residency program at Community Memorial Health Systems in Ventura.

Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito said that in her role as associate dean for admissions, Quinn “has been a tremendous asset to the



Erin Quinn (center)—seen here on her last day as dean with admissions counselors Susan Wong (left) and Katie Lewis—stepped down from her Keck School administrative positions to create a community-based, multi-specialty residency program at Community Memorial Health Systems in Ventura, but will remain a member of the Keck School faculty.

Keck School. She has led the M.D. program’s Office of Admissions, as well as the undergraduate Baccalaureate/M.D. Program, with passion, dedication and commitment.”

He noted that during her tenure as associate dean the medical school steadily increased its number of applications received—jumping 30 percent in the last 10 years, while at the same time improving the quality of the applicant pool, as evidenced by higher MCAT scores and GPAs.

Clive Taylor, emeritus senior associate dean, praised Quinn’s service as outstanding and highlighted her role as associate dean for

admissions at a time when the school sought to elevate the standards of its medical education.

He said, “The quality of admitted students clearly was a key element. While we identified a number of candidates, both internally and externally, who were well qualified for the role, Dr. Quinn stood out for her manifest enthusiasm, her commitment and the integrity that she brought to the process.”

He added, “The results of her efforts speak for themselves as the Keck School has achieved educational outcomes that rank among the very best.”

During her tenure, Quinn was repeatedly recognized by students and faculty for her teaching in Professionalism and the Practice of Medicine (PPM)—for which she twice received the school’s award for Outstanding Teaching—the Master of Public Health program, the Master’s in Global Medicine program and a selective in Health Policy for medical students.

Quinn oversaw an admissions team that was one of the first in the nation to evaluate medical school applicants holistically—considering not just test scores but life histories and other qualitative factors such as “how they got to where they were, who they were ... all sorts of things,” she said.

Quinn estimated that she helped select and train as many as 2,000 Keck students, adding, “I’m still in touch with so many of them—I go to more weddings than you can imagine,” she said. “They’re my legacy and the most important thing to me is that they are compassionate and caring. Together with my admissions committee, we found amazing individuals who became compassionate and caring physicians working throughout California and across the nation.”

‘The results of her efforts speak for themselves as the Keck School has achieved educational outcomes that rank among the very best.’

—Clive Taylor, emeritus senior associate dean at the Keck School

HEALTH: New position will oversee clinical elements of USC’s academic medical center

Continued from page 1
Doctors of USC.
The new senior vice president for health will report directly to the president and will work closely with Provost Elizabeth Garrett, who will remain responsible for the academic and research missions of the university’s medical enterprise.
At the same time, Nikias announced the establishment of the Medical Enterprise Oversight Committee, chaired by Garrett and consisting of

the senior vice president for health; Robert Abeles, senior vice president for finance and chief financial officer; Todd Dickey, senior vice president for administration; and Carmen Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine.
“To reach the pinnacle of academic excellence, the university’s medical enterprise must excel in the tripartite missions of academic medicine: to produce cutting edge and consequential research in basic and translational science;

to train the next generation of leaders for the medical profession and the academy; and to provide exceptional clinical care through its hospitals and clinical practices,” Nikias said. “I have charged this committee to rigorously oversee our entire academic medical enterprise to make sure we advance these missions collaboratively, guided in all cases by our academic values.”
Mitch Creem, CEO of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital

will report to the new senior vice president, as will Minor Anderson, CEO of the Doctors of USC. Puliafito will continue to report to the provost on all educational and research matters, and will work closely with the new senior vice president for health with respect to clinical endeavors of the school, including faculty recruitment.
Nikias has formed a search committee for the new position, including department chairs at the Keck School of Medicine, as well as Garrett,

Abeles, Puliafito and Creem. Three of USC’s trustees will serve as presidential advisors: John Kusmiersky, David L. Lee and William J. Shoen. The president of the faculty, Peter Conti, and other representatives of the Keck School of Medicine faculty will interview the final candidates.
Isaacson, Miller, a highly regarded executive search firm, is assisting USC in the national search. Nominations and applications should be directed to 4221@imsearch.com.

GOOD NEIGHBORS: Hospital employees’ generosity clinches fundraising campaign goal

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CEO Mitch Creem. “At its core, this campaign is about community. At USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, we understand how important it is to support the well-being of our community and those we serve each day.”
Commitment to community was something that resonated with hospital employees as well.
“This is a great program,” said Liliana Jimenez, in Quality and Outcomes Management at USC University Hospital. Jimenez was one of a dozen Good Neighbors Campaign leaders at the USC hospitals who were instrumental in spreading the message to more than 2,000 employees. Together, the workforce raised \$20,000 more than they did in 2009.
“That 100 percent of donations go to the community and no money is used for administrative costs is key for me,” she said.
More than 6,000 people across the University contributed to the \$1.38 million in donations for programs that change the lives of families who live in

the neighborhoods around the University Park and Health Sciences campuses. The money raises funds for community partnerships that improve educational outcomes of K-12 students, encourage healthy living in the area of obesity and diabetes, and support job training and small business development.
More than 400 grants have been awarded to community organizations partnering with USC.
The time for USC staff, faculty and students to form partnerships with the community and apply for the University Neighborhood Outreach grants is fast approaching. The university representative planning to be involved with a grant application must attend a mandatory grant-writing workshop before submitting a proposal. The next workshop on the Health Sciences Campus is March 3. For more details, visit communities.usc.edu/uno
“I am extremely proud to be a member of the Trojan Family. This year was even more special with the generous matching gift we received from the USC hospitals,” said Carolina Castillo, the campaign director.



Mitch Creem (left), CEO of the USC hospitals, presents Tom Sayles, vice president of Government and Civic Engagement at USC, with a check for \$75,000 toward Good Neighbors Campaign.

“I am thankful to each and every university employee who gave, small and large, and particularly grateful to our dedicated campaign leaders who are the voice of the community.”

Tania Chatila

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Tuesday, Feb. 22

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “VCP Mutation in Frontotemporal Dementia and Hereditary Inclusion-Body Myopathy and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis,” Virginia Kimonis, UC Irvine. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

Wednesday, Feb. 23

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “The Complexity of Synaptic Signaling Networks: Insights into the Molecular Mechanisms Altered in Psychiatric Disorders,” Marcelo Coba, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Thursday, Feb. 24

9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. KSOM Research Seminar. “Everything You Wanted to Know About NIH Institutional Research Training and Career Development Funding Opportunities – T32s and K12s,” Walter Goldschmidts, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. MCH 149. Info: (323) 442-7232

Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Translating Basic Studies of Embryonic Development into Generating Pancreatic and Intestinal Tissue from Stem Cells,” James Wells, University of Cincinnati. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, Feb. 25

8 a.m. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Diagnostic Problems in Hemophilia and Von Willebrand Disease,” Carol Kasper, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

8:30 a.m. Surgery Grand Rounds. “New Medical and Surgical Techniques in the Treatment of Non-small Cell Cancer,” Robert Cerfolio, University of Alabama. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-2506

11 a.m. “Optimizing Therapeutic Choices for Front-line Treatment and Beyond in Patients with Indolent Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma,” Eduardo Sotomayer, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3914

Monday, Feb. 28

Noon. KSOM Research

Seminar. “Drug Targets for New Classes of Cancer Drugs that Fundamentally Change the Management of Prostate Cancer,” Norman Maitland, University of York Heslington. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-7232

Wednesday, Mar. 2

2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Center for Excellence in Research. “Developing Funded Research Programs,” Randolph Hall, USC. NML East Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-6709

Friday, Mar. 4

3 p.m. Global Health Lecture: Visions and Voices Signature Event. “Betrayal of Trust: Critical Issues in Global Healthcare,” Laurie Garrett, USC. KAM Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 865-0419

Wednesday, Mar. 9

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Functional Connectivity in the Retina at the Resolution of Photoreceptors,” Greg Field, Salk Institute. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Center for Excellence in Research. “Developing NIH Grant Applications,” Steve Moldin, USC. NML West Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-6709

Thursday, Mar. 17

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Coupled Binding and Folding of Intrinsically Disordered Proteins,” Allan Chris Ferreon, Scripps Research Institute. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Friday, Mar. 18

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. USC Memory and Aging Center and Keck School of Medicine Seminar. “Many Faces of Dementia: Serving Diverse Populations,” Various speakers. \$75 registration, \$45 registration for full-time students. UPC: Davidson Conference Ctr. Info: (626) 470-6619

Wednesday, Mar. 30

4 p.m. – 6 p.m. Center for Excellence in Research. “Developing and Submitting a DoD and DoE Basic Research Grant Application,” James Murday, USC. NML West Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-6709

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.



Jon Nalick

SHOOTING HOOPS SCORES BIG FOR CHARITY—The USC School of Pharmacy fraternity Alpha Iota Pi raised \$1,821 for the USC Good Neighbors Campaign on Feb. 10, as dozens of participants lined up at Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad to sink free throws. Finishing first place was third-year pharmacy student Thinh Nguyen, followed by runner-up first-year student Brent Tambourine. Bryan Son, a second-year student, was honored for raising the most money, having brought in \$275. Above, first-year student Amanda Wong shows off her skills.

NAE: USC researchers named to prestigious academy

Continued from page 1
eye diseases through engineering prosthetics. He is a co-inventor of a revolutionary electronic retinal prosthesis—an implantable artificial device that has restored light perception and form distinction to blind individuals. He has demonstrated that the inner retinal layers are relatively well-preserved even in advanced disease and can be stimulated to function by prosthetic devices.

A member of several societies, including the IEEE Biomedical Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society, Humayun was voted one of the “Best Doctors in America” for three consecutive years. He holds 18 patents and has nearly 90 pending. His team’s Argus II retinal implant won a 2010 *Popular Mechanics* Breakthrough Award.

Humayun received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University, his medical degree from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from the University of North Carolina. After an ophthalmology residency at the Duke Eye Center, he completed fellowships in both retinovascular and vitreoretinal surgery at the Wilmer Institute of Johns Hopkins University before joining USC in 2001.

A pioneer in the field of nanorobots, Requicha joined USC Viterbi’s computer

science and electrical engineering faculty in 1986. His research interests include sensor/actuator networks, robotics and automation, 3-D geometric modeling (he is one of the first to develop this technology), computer graphics and artificial intelligence.

Requicha is founding director of the USC Viterbi Laboratory for Molecular Robotics. The group has designed the means to assemble nano-components for robotics, as well as the components and the robots themselves. From 1986 to 2003, he directed the USC Programmable Automation

Laboratory. Prior to engaging in nanotechnology research, he helped develop the solid modeling technology widely used in industry, where it has replaced traditional drafting and enabled improvements in productivity and cost.

A life fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, a fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Requicha was recently appointed a Distinguished Lecturer of the IEEE Nanotechnology Council.

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Public Relations and Marketing
1975 Zonal Ave. KAM 400
Los Angeles, CA 90033

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