As Georgia Gwinnett College entered its seventh year of operations, it continued its impressive record of achievement. “For such a young college to achieve so many distinctions so quickly is a testament to our innovative model for higher education and reflects our employees’ proven dedication to improving student success,” said Dr. Stas Preczewski, interim president.

We’re #5!

Georgia Gwinnett rose from obscurity to the fifth highest-ranked Southern public regional college, according to U.S. News & World Report magazine. “We are particularly excited that the score placing us so high was academic peer assessment, which represents GGC’s academic standing,” said Dr. Lois C. Richardson, acting senior vice president for Academic and Student Affairs.

Criteria used by the magazine to calculate college rankings include academic peer assessment, freshman retention rate, graduation rate, percentage of classes under 20 and over 50 seats, student/faculty ratio, SAT/ACT percentile data, freshmen high school rankings, acceptance rate and alumni giving rate. In addition to peer assessment, GGC scored highly with a freshmen retention rate of 71 percent, an area where it is comparable to Georgia’s state universities, surpassing other Georgia state colleges. It also scored favorably for its small classes and student/faculty ratio.

The Georgia Gwinnett campus now bustles with almost 10,000 students. Shown here, students change classes during a crisp fall afternoon. As Georgia Gwinnett College entered its seventh year of operations, it continued its impressive record of achievement.

How does a college say good-bye to its first President?

This is a question not faced by most institutions for decades, if not hundreds of years. Georgia Gwinnett recently recognized this historic moment through a series of events spread across several months, as the college community honored its founding and charter president, Dr. Daniel J. Kaufman.

After seven years at GGC, Kaufman departed the college to assume the presidency of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, effective July 1. Dr. Stas Preczewski, charter vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, has since served as interim president.

At an outdoor ceremony held on the main lawn last spring, students, faculty and staff were joined by Gwinnett business and civic leaders in celebrating Kaufman’s seven years of service.
years with the college with memories, laughter and some tears. The celebration continued at the spring commencement, and through smaller events for charter faculty, the college cabinet, and trustees and donors. Together, many of these individuals partnered with Kaufman in creating the college, and wanted to express their own farewells.

“It’s not every day that you build a college from scratch,” said Preczewski. “GGC is Georgia’s first four-year, public college established in more than 100 years. There were no instruction manuals outlining the process. There was only this monumental task … and Dan Kaufman to take it on.”

The college’s first employee, Kaufman was hired in 2005 by the University System of Georgia (USG) to establish a then-unnamed college in Gwinnett County – at that time the largest county east of the Mississippi not served by a bachelor degree-granting college. With a rapidly expanding population, the county and its immediate region were underserved when it came to higher education.

“Make your world what it needs to be,” he said. “There is no shortage of challenges. Do not be deterred. You know how to imagine, how to anticipate, how to create. You did it here. Now go do it to your world.” Kaufman reflected on his words at the college’s opening ceremony in 2006, where he cited Irish poet William Butler Yeats comment that “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

Kaufman envisioned Georgia Gwinnett College as welcoming a highly diverse student body and as being literally built from the ground up to help all students succeed, regardless of their academic preparation. As an access institution, it would be a new, innovative model for public higher education in the 21st Century, and have a total commitment to students. He envisioned a college where teaching, student engagement, scholarship, student activities and services moved in a deliberately integrated fashion to ensure students would not just go to college, but instead, where students would stay and successfully graduate.

“This was unheard of. In fact, GGC was labeled, ‘an experiment’ by many,” said Preczewski. “And some people didn’t believe it could work. But Dan Kaufman believed in Georgia Gwinnett’s vision, and his infectious enthusiasm made the rest of us believe. Today, his vision is reality.”

Georgia Gwinnett opened its doors to 118 students in August 2006. When Kaufman presided over his last commencement ceremony in May, GGC was ending its sixth academic year as one of the 10 largest institutions in the USG. During the ceremony, which featured former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young as keynote speaker, Kaufman witnessed the college’s 1000th graduate receive his degree, as well as the first double-degree and double-major.

Under Kaufman’s leadership, GGC achieved retention rates comparable to state universities, unheard of for an access institution. Its own students placed Georgia Gwinnett in the top 10 percent of colleges nationwide in the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, supportive campus environment and faculty engagement outside of the classroom.

“GGC’s continuing successes are a testament to Dan’s inspiring leadership, incredible vision and heartfelt dedication in serving the citizens of Gwinnett County, the State of Georgia, our nation and beyond. Georgia Gwinnett College will forever stand as just one of his legacies.”

On the eve of his final work day as president, Kaufman, and his wife, Kathryn, were honored by members of the Gwinnett community at a private dinner hosted by the GGC Foundation.

Speakers included Tommy Hughes, chair of the foundation’s board of trustees, Glenn S. White, charter chair of the foundation’s board of trustees and Richard Tucker, a member of the USG Board of Regents.

“Dan and Kathryn, thank you for taking a leap of faith and believing in the potential of Gwinnett County,” said Hughes. “You have turned our vision of a four-year college into a thriving center of learning, a cornerstone of thought leadership and a key driver of economic impact. Thanks to your hard work and leadership, GGC will forever be a transformational and educational asset for the community, state and nation.”

Tucker then announced that many of the dinner participants, as well as others unable to attend the event, had together made nearly $300,000 in commitments to a scholarship to be established in Kaufman’s name.

Efforts to fund the scholarship began shortly after Kaufman announced he would leave the college to become president of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce. Peach State Federal Credit Union made a leadership commitment of $50,000 to the cause.

“GGC is critical to the future vitality of our county, region and state,” said Marshall Boutwell, president and CEO of Peach State Federal Credit Union. “While supporting the college is an ongoing responsibility of our community, it also is our responsibility to recognize pivotal achievements worthy of significant distinction and honor. Dr. Kaufman’s role as GGC’s founding president is one of those achievements, and we at Peach State Federal Credit Union are privileged to contribute to this historic community legacy.”

In his final public remarks as president, Kaufman advised the 2013 spring graduates that their contributions will not be based on credentials, but on the application of their talents for the benefit of their fellow citizens and communities. He challenged them to be lifelong learners and doers.

“Make your world what it needs to be,” he said. “There is no shortage of challenges. Do not be deterred. You know how to imagine, how to anticipate, how to create. You did it here. Now go do it to your world.” Kaufman reflected on his words at the college’s opening ceremony in 2006, where he cited Irish poet William Butler Yeats comment that “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

Kaufman thanked the college community for helping him light his own fire, and for the privilege of serving as their colleague. He concluded the ceremony with his trademark farewell, “Now, go be great. Good luck, Godspeed and go Grizzlies.”

“Preserving GGC’s History
GGC is conducting a series of interviews with Dr. Daniel J. Kaufman and other key individuals involved with the college’s early years. This oral history will be permanently preserved on video and in a written transcript in the Library and Learning Center.
College establishes School of Health Sciences

White named dean, nursing program begins fall 2014

On track for its plans to introduce its long-awaited baccalaureate program in nursing in the fall of 2014, Georgia Gwinnett has established a School of Health Sciences.

Dr. Diane E. White was hired as charter dean of the new school, which will be housed in the college’s new, $30 million Allied Health and Sciences building, scheduled for completion in late summer of 2014.

“There is an increased need for baccalaureate prepared nurses and Georgia Gwinnett is poised to meet the need with its fine academic reputation,” White said. “I am excited to have the opportunity to design a bachelor’s degree nursing program from the beginning, and I know that the Gwinnett community is very supportive of GGC’s plans.”

The program is now accepting applications, and will accept 30 students each fall and spring semester. Designed in collaboration with community health care partners, the program has been approved by the University System Board of Regents and has received initial approval from the Georgia Board of Nursing.

In addition to nursing, White will lead her team in developing other degree programs for the School of Health Sciences. She holds both a master’s and a doctorate in nursing from Georgia State University.

She comes to Georgia Gwinnett from Georgia Perimeter College, where she served as dean of Health Sciences since 2009. In that position, she oversaw programs in nursing, dental hygiene and six collaborative programs with Georgia Health Sciences University, the DeKalb Medical Center Radiology Technology Program and the GGC’s Health Systems School of Radiology. She was responsible for strategic planning and the development of new degree and non-degree programs.

Before her service as dean, White was Georgia Perimeter’s department chair of nursing for three years. She led the program in achieving over 85 percent retention rates, while growing the program to over 300 students with NLCLEX rates over 98 percent.

White taught nursing courses at Georgia Perimeter College since 2007, and for the previous 10 years at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing at Mercer University on the Atlanta campus.

White has an extensive record of service and scholarship which includes national and state presentations, multiple funded grants, and service on state nursing coalitions and health care committees. She maintains her critical care registered nurse certification.

Santos named dean of School of Liberal Arts

Dr. Adolfo Santos has been named dean of the GGC School of Liberal Arts. He replaces Dr. Lois C. Richardson, who is serving as acting dean, student affairs and provost.

“I am thrilled to be the new dean of the School of Liberal Arts,” said Santos. “GGC’s open access mission, combined with its success in retaining and graduating students, makes it a wonderful team of which to be a part. The GGC faculty and the School of Liberal Arts are committed to the success of our students, and their mentoring and teaching are a perfect reflection of that commitment.

Combining these unique characteristics with a Quality Enhancement Plan that prepares our students for the global marketplace makes this a great and exciting institution.”

A native of Houston, Texas, Santos earned his doctorate in political science from the University of Houston. He received a prestigious American Council on Education Fellowship, during which he spent a year being mentored by President Dianne Harrison and Provost Kathryn Cruz-Uribe. The fellowship broadened his experience in the financial and business administration, academic affairs, advancement, student affairs and community engagement aspects of higher education.

Santos received leadership training in the areas of university finance, strategic planning, public relations, advancement, and government relations through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Millennium Leadership Institute.

His previous positions include special assistant to the president and chief of the Department of Social Sciences. Santos applied his skills in program evaluation and research for the University’s Center for Public Policy and the Center for Mexican American Studies.

Santos also has a history of community service, including efforts regarding at-risk children, education and the Hispanic community.

Dr. Adolfo Santos, Dean, School of Liberal Arts

California State University-Monterey Bay

Dr. Adolfo Santos, Dean, School of Liberal Arts

Construction continues on GGC’s critically needed, $30 million Allied Health and Sciences Building. The three-story, 91,000 sq. ft. structure will provide a large variety of facilities for the college, including three physics laboratories, six biology laboratories, seven chemistry laboratories, four anatomy and physiology laboratories, and one lab each for psychology, exercise science, IT systems and digital media. It will house the schools of Science and Technology and Health Sciences and will open for fall semester 2014. It also will enable the college to increase its enrollment to more than 11,000.

Dr. Diane E. White, Dean, School of Health Sciences

Lois C. Richardson, who is serving as acting dean, student affairs and provost.

DeKalb Medical Center Radiology Technologist Program and the GGC’s Health Systems School of Radiology. She was responsible for strategic planning and the development of new degree and non-degree programs.

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Under the leadership of Dr. Darin S. Wilson, director of Athletics, and a team of outstanding coaches, the baseball, softball and men’s and women’s tennis teams each posted highly-successful opening campaigns and are positioned to compete for postseason titles in the spring of 2014. In fact, the Grizzlies had winning first seasons in five of its six sports. Georgia Gwinnett posted back-to-back winning seasons in men’s and women’s soccer, recently claiming the school’s first postseason championship.

“The Office of Athletics’ core purpose is to develop lifelong leaders of character through academic and athletic excellence,” said Wilson. “We are very pleased that our athletes are not only thriving on the field, but in the classroom and in the community, as well.”

Of the college’s inaugural group of student-athletes, 57 players – more than half of the total student-athlete population – earned the Director of Athletics’ Honor Roll marks with a 3.0 GPA or better semester GPA in the fall 2012 semester. Another 50 completed the feat during the spring 2013 semester. An impressive 37 posted a 3.5 or above, with eight earning a 4.0 during the year.

Meanwhile, each team completes community service projects throughout the year on campus and in the Gwinnett area to improve the places we live, work and play.

“Overall, it has been a terrific start for our student-athletes in the classroom,” said Wilson. “We preach the importance of pursuing excellence on and off the field and we are proud of our teams and coaches for their dedication to that cause.”

The Grizzlies have quickly built international connections, welcoming players from five continents to make up the college’s first-ever squads. This diverse group blends international standouts with top local talent from Gwinnett and surrounding areas.

Special education major Antonio Allen takes a swing in the Grizzlies’ new baseball stadium.

GGC women’s soccer goalie, Alex Hays, a junior majoring in criminal justice, stops an opponent’s attempt at a goal. The women’s soccer team finished the fall 2013 season with a winning record of 14-6-1.

Men’s soccer wins Grizzlies’ first-ever postseason championship

The Georgia Gwinnett men’s soccer team captured the college’s first-ever intercollegiate athletics postseason title when it won the 2013 Association of Independent Institutions (A.I.I.) this November.

The Grizzlies hosted the nation’s top four programs from the A.I.I., representing institutions from California, Iowa and Illinois, for a championship banquet followed by two hard-fought days of action at the Grizzly Soccer Complex.

The third-seeded Grizzlies defeated second-seeded California State University - San Marcos in the tournament semifinals in a tight 2-1 finish. In the finals, the Grizzlies rolled over the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics’ (NAIA) No. 3 team and tournament top seed Ashford University (Iowa) by a 3-0 score to claim the championship.

The win propelled GGC to its highest ranking to date, a No. 9 spot in the NAIA Men’s Soccer Coaches’ Top 25 Poll, and the program’s first-ever NAIA championship tournament in any sport.

Members of the Grizzlies’ men’s soccer team celebrate after having made history by winning Georgia Gwinnett College’s first postseason championship of any intercollegiate sport.
Grizzly Athletics Complex completed

The Georgia Gwinnett Grizzlies compete at the new Grizzly Athletics Complex, a sparkling venue with stadiums near the college’s main entrance on Collins Hill Road. The complex includes state-of-the-art baseball, softball and soccer facilities, as well as the program’s Athletics building.

Construction was fast-tracked to accommodate the first season of competition. The college broke ground on the complex in June 2012, and by September of that same year, the Grizzlies were competing on their new synthetic turf soccer field as construction continued on the rest of the complex. The baseball field became available for play in March 2013, and the softball team took the field for the first time a month later.

In May, the Grizzly Athletics Building opened its doors to administration, coaches and players. The two-story structure includes office space for coaches and administration, team locker rooms, a weight room, training areas and dedicated academic support space. The building also includes a hospitality suite overlooking the playing fields, perfect for hosting guests during competition.

The Grizzlies’ 800-seat baseball stadium includes a press box for working media and game day staff and a top-of-the-line natural grass playing field.

The softball stadium features seating for 500 spectators with a similar press box and pristine playing surface. Both fields boast state-of-the-art drainage and irrigation systems. A separate batting cage structure was built adjacent to the fields for training and pre-game practice.

The Grizzly soccer venue offers a combination of bleacher and hillside seating with fantastic views of the playing field.

The soccer, baseball and softball fields each have digital scoreboards and are supported by a multi-purpose entrance structure that provides ticket sales, concessions and restroom facilities. The entire site is topped off with new landscaping, trees and walking paths.

Meanwhile, the Grizzly tennis teams have enjoyed competition at the GGC Tennis Facility just north of the main campus on Collins Hill Road. The facility boasts 12 hard courts and four clay courts, a weight room, staff offices and team space. The venue was acquired by GGC in the spring of 2012.

The world-class quality of GGC’s facilities positions the college to host tournament events. So far, the college has already been selected to host conference tournaments in men’s and women’s soccer and softball. The Grizzlies will continue to submit bids for future conference and national tournament play, bringing visitors from across the country to the GGC campus.
Community support helps students in many ways

Georgia Gwinnett continues to connect with community partners who support the college’s mission and vision. These individuals, companies and other organizations generously support college programs, scholarships and other initiatives key to the institution’s unique commitment to student success.

“Private support is critical to any institution’s ability to provide the margin of excellence needed to ensure that all students receive the high-quality, integrated educational experience they deserve,” said Lori Buckheister, associate vice president for Development. “Our college has a wide variety of opportunities for community partners and donors to make a real difference in the lives of our students, both today and for decades to come.”

While scholarships are a well-known and direct way to help individual students, there are additional ways to provide support that can impact large numbers of students and significant college programs. Following are some examples of how the college’s community partners are helping to provide this support.

“Our college has a wide variety of opportunities for community partners and donors to make a real difference in the lives of our students, both today and for decades to come.”

– Lori Buckheister

Program Support

One example is the TIC-TAC-TOE program, offered through the School of Transitional Studies. This innovative suite of tutoring services have made quite an impact across campus, and attracted the interests of donors focused on making an immediate difference. Such programs help bring under-prepared students to appropriate academic levels, and support the goals of Complete College Georgia.

A $10,000 grant from The Primerica Foundation supported expansion of the TAC (Tutors Around Campus) program, which provided tutoring services in a variety of locations, such as dining areas, the student center and student residence halls. TAC attracts students reluctant to access services in the traditional tutoring lab environment. This means the program reaches students who would not otherwise seek assistance. TAC also effectively provides expanded services without the demand of a space designated only for tutoring services.

A $17,500 grant from the Mary P. Dolciani Halloran Foundation supported TOE (Tutors Online Everywhere), which is an important source of tutoring for today’s busy students, many of whom are balancing classes with work and family. With almost 40 percent of GGC’s students working at least part time, TOE can provide tutoring help whenever and wherever it is convenient to them.

Facility Naming

A sign on the third floor of Building B now identifies a conference room as the H.J. Russell & Company Conference Room – a permanent reminder of the company’s generous gift of $50,000 to support critical needs at the college.

“The company allowed us to use its donation wherever it was needed most. This is important because such unrestricted gifts give the college tremendous flexibility in funding unmet needs, answering unexpected challenges or taking advantage of unplanned opportunities,” said Buckheister. “In this case, we identified an unfunded project we believed would be especially meaningful to the company, since it is in the construction industry.”

The funds provided an elevator in Building D, which houses the college’s Office of Admissions and other vital services. This building, acquired by the college several years ago, was originally built before the Americans with Disabilities Act. The elevator made the building ADA compliant, and enables individuals with disabilities to access the second floor.

The Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia (CFNEG) made a grant of $50,000 in support of the college’s new Allied Health and Sciences building. The funds will be used to outfit learning spaces to meet current and future technical requirements. In appreciation for this generous support, the college will name a selected space for CFNEG.

“Naming opportunities provide donors with the ability to provide base support for the college while ensuring that its support is permanently recognized,” she said. “As a new college, we have many opportunities for donors who wish to create such a legacy.”

Other Grants

The college also applies for grants to support specific needs. Earlier this year, Georgia Gwinnett College was awarded a $500,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant by Georgia’s Department of Transportation (GDOT) to implement a pedestrian pathways project. The project will connect the college’s Admissions Building and the Valentine Building along Collins Hill Road to Building A, the Parking Deck, and University Center Lane near the campus’ new loop road and Grizzly Athletics Complex.

A seed grant from the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), funded by Symantec and organized by the Academic Alliance was used to develop a “Women in IT” learning community at the college. Learning communities are designed to create an enhanced educational experience for students pursuing the same field of study. They provide special activities that involve and encourage students, expose them to positive role models, and help them succeed.

“The college works closely with many types of organizations, including private foundations, to pursue grant opportunities,” Buckheister said. “Grants can be bestowed or earned in competitive programs, or in reaction to a proposal that matches a need to a donor’s philanthropic interests.”

For more information about supporting the college, please contact the Office of Development at 678-407-5588 or development@ggc.edu.

A $500,000 GDOT grant will enable the college to complete much-needed pedestrian pathways projects in the areas indicated by the red lines. In this view, Collins Hill Road is at far right and runs from the bottom to the top of the picture.
The high ranking follows on the designation of Georgia Gwinnett as a College of Distinction. Visit www.collegesofdistinction.com for more information.

Military-friendly designations

Georgia Gwinnett also has been named a military-friendly institution by two different service member organizations. GGC was named a 2014 Military Friendly School by Victory Media, the premier media entity for military personnel transitioning into civilian life. The 2014 Military Friendly Schools list honors the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country that are doing the most to embrace America’s military service members, veterans, and spouses as students and ensure their success on campus, according to Victory Media. GGC also was selected as a top military-friendly school by Military Advanced Education, the journal of higher learning for today’s service member, and KMI Media Group, a publisher of defense-related publications and websites.

The annual Guide to Military Friendly Schools is distributed in print and digital format to hundreds of thousands of active and former military personnel. GGC will appear in the “2014 Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities” in the December issue of Military Advanced Education.

Earlier this year, the college established the Office of Veterans Success, which certifies enrollment with the VA for all students using GI Bill education benefits, provides scholarship and job opportunity information, and refers students to additional services either with the VA or on campus, such as tutoring. About 230 veterans attend GGC.

Enrollment continues to increase

Georgia Gwinnett College expected about 9,500 students for fall semester, but surpassed this number by almost 400. The college is preparing for a significant increase next year when its long-awaited Allied Health and Sciences building opens. Not only will the building provide additional laboratory, classroom and office space, it will house GGC’s new baccalaureate program in nursing (see related story, page 3).

This year, Georgia Gwinnett College received a record 8,000 applications from prospective students. About 22,000 prospective students indicated an interest in attending GGC, based on data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Georgia Gwinnett is the college of choice for Gwinnett County students, as it enrolls more Gwinnett residents than any other institution. About 70 percent of the college’s student body hails from Gwinnett.

$296 million economic impact

Georgia Gwinnett is a driving force in the local economy, according to an annual economic impact study. “All colleges act as economic engines,” said Preczewski. “This impact can be seen the most at the local level, but because of the way dollars are spent and re-spent, that impact is multiplied and spread throughout the Gwinnett region.

This is one of the many ways in which GGC has become woven into the fabric of our community – not to mention the future value provided by our 1,500 newly minted, talented and productive graduates.”

For fiscal year 2012, Georgia Gwinnett was second among state colleges, generating $296 million in economic impact, including the creation of 3,029 jobs. The college itself employs 1,026, roughly aligning with the USG’s overall employment of about 33 percent of the jobs it creates.

The other 67 percent are off-campus positions in either the private or public sectors. On average, for each job created on campus, there are two off-campus jobs that exist because of spending related to the institution. To calculate the economic impact, the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business analyzed data collected between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012. The annual study is conducted on behalf of the USG Board of Regents.

GGC memorializes vice president with street name

GGC permanently memorialized charter cabinet member Lonnie Harvel by naming one of the college’s main streets in his honor. Harvel, who passed unexpectedly in November of 2010, was the college’s vice president of Educational Technology and an associate professor of technology.

“GGC is Lonnie’s legacy, and it is fitting that the GGC community will forever be reminded of this every time they enter the main entrances into campus,” said Daniel J. Kaufman, then president of GGC. “Lonnie Harvel Boulevard touches every part of the GGC campus, just as Lonnie did.”

Shown are Harvel’s sister-in-law, Susan Aenchbacher, daughters Samantha and Emily Harvel and widow, Martha Aenchbacher-Harvel, Daniel J. Kaufman, Harvel’s sister, Leslie Harvel and brother, Lester Harvel.
Charter GGC graduate Andrea Ide, Class of 2008, used her education and entrepreneurial spirit to open Crazy Cakes cupcake shop in Suwanee.

Georgia Gwinnett College’s 2013 national AITP Conference delegation brought home the college’s first national championship. Shown (seated, left to right): Merri Brantley, Nicholas Pyron, Jia Avantandriat. Raymond Lewique, Chistopha Davis, and standing: Evelyn Blanchard, Rama Sanghvi, Daniel Monsour, Stephen Atingh, Keiji Jones, Marcius Michalske and Llisa Pollacia. Not shown: Jonathan Gillman. Donaldsoo and Pyron took third place in mobile applications development; Michalske and Lewique won second place in Java development, and Jones and Armendariz took the heavily coveted first place in database design.

Georgia Gwinnett graduate Andrea Ide, Class of 2008, used her education and entrepreneurial spirit to open Crazy Cakes cupcake shop in Suwanee.

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