



2015

An Examination of Existing and Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions' Latino Initiatives and Culture

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Recommended Citation

Corral, D., Gasman, M., Nguyen, T., & Samayoa, A. (2015). An Examination of Existing and Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions' Latino Initiatives and Culture. *Center for Minority Serving Institutions*, Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/344

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Disciplines

Education | Higher Education



An Examination of Existing and Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Latino Initiatives and Culture

Despite the fact that Latinos comprise the largest minority group in the United States and one of the nation's fastest-growing populations, they tend to cluster in relatively isolated pockets within certain states, counties, and large metropolitan cities around the country (Brown & Lopez, 2013). This pattern persists as Latinos make their way into higher education. Indeed 59% of all Hispanics enrolled in U.S. colleges attend Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) (Santiago, 2013). Given that HSIs make up only 11% of all postsecondary colleges and universities in the United States (Galdeano & Santiago, 2014) but enroll well over half of all Hispanic college students in this country, the role these institutions play in educating the burgeoning U.S. Latino population merits greater visibility.

This report examines two small samples of institutions that fall on either end of the spectrum of institutions that serve large populations of Latino students: HSIs with at least 60% Latino enrollments, and schools designated as Emerging HSIs, which have Latino enrollments ranging from 15% to 24% (see sidebar, p. 2, on Emerging HSIs).² We ask how these institutions may be serving or under-serving their students.

Even though HSIs and Emerging HSIs have great potential for meeting their Latino students' needs, there are often concerns about whether they succeed in doing so. For HSIs, in particular, it is important to consider whether or not they are using their federal funding to provide targeted initiatives for Hispanic students. For Emerging HSIs, investigating what proactive steps they are taking to serve their Latino students can paint a better picture of how, should they achieve HSI status, they might embrace their HSI identity and what kind of initiatives they will undertake. Looking at these two types of institutions also allows us to see how HSIs are leveraging their federal designation to benefit Latino students compared with Emerging HSIs that do not enroll enough Latino students to qualify for federal funding.

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¹ This report uses the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* interchangeably to refer to people who are of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or of other Spanish cultures, regardless of race.

² Enrollment data are based on 2013-2014 fall enrollment figures from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System from the National Center for Education Statistics.



HSIs promote cultural inclusion and encourage their students to become empowered.

WHAT COUNTS AS A HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI) AND EMERGING HSI?

Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is a federal designation referring to institutions whose enrollments are at least 25% Hispanic full-time, undergraduate, equivalent (FTE; Office of Postsecondary Education, 2014). The designation became part of federal policy in 1992, as an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Gasman & Conrad, 2013). Notably, the federal government does not maintain a formal list of HSIs. But according to *Excelencia in Education*, a research-based organization dedicated to accelerating Latino students' success in higher education, 409 institutions meet the Department of Education's (DOE) requirement that at least 25% of its FTE be Hispanic students (Galdeano & Santiago, 2014; *Excelencia in Education*, 2015).

Emerging HSIs are institutions with 15% to 24% FTE Hispanic enrollment (Santiago & Andrade, 2010). It is important to note that *Excelencia in Education* developed this category. Furthermore, according to its 2015 report, *Excelencia in Education* identified 296 Emerging HSIs in 31 states in the United States during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Those institutions in this subsection of higher education merit attention because they might become official HSIs in the near future and serve a large portion of the Latino college-student population (*Excelencia In Education*, 2015). Nevertheless, these colleges and universities are not legally recognized as HSIs and do not receive federal funding as such, though it is conceivable for them to become HSIs in the near future and receive funding.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON HSIs

In Laden's (2004) overview of the anatomy and location of HSIs, she described how HSIs serve as an opening in the pipeline of K-16 Latino access to education. HSIs enroll high percentages of low-income and ethnically diverse students, thereby working to diminish growing education gaps based on race and income that plague the nation. Furthermore, she found that HSIs promote cultural inclusion and encourage their students to become empowered. However, she does not delve into the specifics of these support systems that help Latina/os succeed in college.

Contreras, Malcolm, and Bensimon (2008) examined how schools designated as HSIs incorporated their HSI status into their mission statements, and they assessed the outcomes of these institutions' Hispanic students. They found that none of the 10 HSIs in their sample mentioned their HSI designation in their mission statements. Moreover, using an Equity Index Formula, the research team established a positive correlation between students attending HSIs and their access to education (Contreras et al., 2008). Yet, HSIs do not produce equitable results for Hispanics in earning bachelors and associates degrees in their sample of 10 HSIs in comparison to White students. Contreras et al. also found inequitable results in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. In summary, their study suggested that, based on their sample of institutions, the identity of HSIs is invisible in their mission statement, leaving reasonable doubt on their purpose and role with regard to the inequitable results found.



In contrast, through a four-institution case study and large-scale surveys of Emerging HSIs in 2006-7, Santiago and Andrade (2010) found that over a third of these institutions had academic programs specifically targeted at Hispanics and had established partnerships with community colleges to create “feeder” programs.

HSIs AND FUNDING

To qualify for federal funding, HSIs must enroll at least 25% undergraduate, FTE Hispanic students and have no less than 50% of their students be low-income.

The Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), a division of the Department of Education, regulates and provides Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including HSIs, with grant funding depending on an institution's eligibility and sector. The mission of the HSI division of the OPE, the sector that allocates fiscal resources to HSIs, is to “[provide] grant funding to institutions of higher education to assist with strengthening institutional programs, facilities, and services to expand the educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans and other underrepresented populations” (Office of Postsecondary Education, 2014).

HSIs that apply for Title III and V grants are provided funding for five years, in which they must reapply contingent upon meeting the criteria.

Title III grants aim to increase the number of Hispanics in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields among two- and four-year institutions (Higher Education Act of 1965). All MSIs are eligible to apply for Title III grants.

Title V grants foster the general development of the college or university and expand opportunities for Hispanics (Higher Education Act of 1965). In order to be eligible for a Title V grant, the institution must be an HSI and show a Hispanic enrollment of “needy students” (Higher Education Act of 1965).

Federal regulations stipulate that in order to maintain Title III and V eligibility, an HSI grantee must maintain its 25% Hispanic enrollment and be “making substantial progress toward achieving the objectives described in its grant application including, if applicable, the institution's success in institutionalizing practices and improvements developed under the grant” (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2014).

LANEY COLLEGE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

TYPE

2-Year, Public

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

18.2%

FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

5,081

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

26% Asian	0% American Indian or Alaska Native
25% Black or African American	
19% Hispanic	16% white
1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

23%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

Open Enrollment

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

11%

HOW ARE HSIs AND EMERGING HSIs SHAPING STUDENT SUCCESS?

To explore what initiatives HSIs and Emerging HSIs are undertaking to serve their Hispanic students, this report addresses the following questions:

1. What are HSIs and Emerging HSIs doing to strengthen institutional programs, facilities, and/or services to expand educational opportunities for Hispanic students?
2. Given the importance of an uplifting and empowering campus culture to Latino success, do these institutions provide a visible Latino/Hispanic culture on campus?

OUR APPROACH

We began our inquiry by selecting five geographically different Existing and Emerging HSIs to explore, using a variety of types of institutions, such as two-year, four-year, public, and private colleges and universities. Once institutions were selected, we checked enrollments using data from the National Center for Educational Statistics to ascertain that they were Emerging and Existing based on the DOE's criteria.


Furthermore, we examined Existing HSIs' Title V funding proposal abstracts, either found on their websites or through the DOE's website, to investigate particular initiatives for which they sought financial support. We then examined each college's website for examples of visible Latino culture, including student support programs aimed at serving Hispanic students. When searching the websites, we looked for keywords such as "Latino," "Hispanic," "Diversity," "Multicultural," and "Hispanic-Serving." Lastly, we navigated further through each website to find additional evidence of Latino culture such as cultural programs or academic support systems.


EMERGING HSIs

Laney College, one of four colleges of the Peralta Community College District, is located in the rich educational corridor of the San Francisco Bay area ("About Laney," n.d.). The downtown Oakland College states that its vision is to create "a dynamic, diverse environment where all are encouraged to become responsible community members, leaders and world citizens" ("About Laney," n.d.).

This Emerging HSI offers several educational opportunities to engage Latinos. Laney's Puente Project aims to "prepare students for the challenges of college studies through a two-semester program of college level English composition, counseling, and a mentorship with a successful community..." ("Laney College Puente Program," n.d.). The college also offers a Mexican and Latin-American Studies associate degree program, which can be applied to the college's requirements.

Finally, Laney sustains the *Programa de Carpenteria Fina* (Fine Carpentry Program), targeting Hispanic individuals interested in continuing their education and learning a vocational trade ("Programa de Carpenteria Fina," n.d.).

 MALCOLM X COLLEGE – CITY COLLEGE OF CHICAGO CHICAGO, ILLINOIS	
TYPE	
2-Year, Public	
FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT	
23.5%	
FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT	
4,321	
FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY	
3% Asian	0% American Indian or Alaska Native
62% Black or African American	6% white
26% Hispanic	0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS	
84%	
AVERAGE ACT SCORE	
Open Enrollment	
LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS	
N/A	

 WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CANYON, TEXAS	
TYPE	UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS
2-Year, Public	39%
FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT	AVERAGE ACT SCORE
22%	5%
FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT	LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS
6,081	0%
FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY	
1% Asian	1% American Indian or Alaska Native
5% Black or African American	65% white
22% Hispanic	
0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	

From 2006 to 2007, **Malcolm X College**, one of Chicago's City Colleges, was an HSI, meeting the federal government's Hispanic enrollment criteria. Its enrollment has since dipped below the threshold, and the college is currently considered an Emerging HSI. Despite its change in federal status, Malcolm X remains a diverse campus positioned within a cosmopolitan city. Its website states: "City Colleges of Chicago values and actively promotes diversity. We believe diversity enhances the richness of the educational experience and leads to understanding, tolerance. ...We believe that faculty and staff diversity should reflect the demographics of our student body" ("Diversity," n.d.).

On its website, Malcolm X does not mention many initiatives geared toward Hispanics. One program that stands out, though, is the Hispanic Leadership Alliance. According to its website, "The Hispanic Leadership Alliance (HLA) seeks to enlighten students on leadership opportunities and community-based organizations. The club serves as a forum to educate members on cultural aspects of the Hispanic community" ("Hispanic Leadership Alliance," n.d.).

With a Latino enrollment of 23%, **West Texas A&M University** could very well qualify for HSI status within the next few years. The University warrants this possibility through its partnerships to encourage a Latino culture on campus and by providing initiatives to support Hispanics.

One example of a cultural program tailored toward Latinos is *Dia de los Muertos—A Celebration of Life*, a week of social programming celebrating the lives of family and friends who have passed away ("Dia de los Muertos—A Celebration of Life," n.d.).

West Texas A&M also supports the Upward Bound and McNair Scholars program, both part of the TRiO program, a federally funded initiative targeting low-income and first-generation college students and disabled students. The Upward Bound program helps facilitate and navigate the college-decision process for low-income high school students, while the McNair Scholars program targets low-income, underrepresented minorities interested in earning a Ph.D. Although not explicitly targeting any single racial or ethnic group, these programs are valuable resources for Latinos.

**WEST HILLS –
COALINGA**
COALINGA, CALIFORNIA

TYPE

2-Year, Public

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

60.5%

FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

1,657

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

3% Asian	0% American Indian or Alaska Native
22% Black or African American	36% white
2% Hispanic	
0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

35%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

Open Enrollment

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

9%

HSIs WITH OVER 60% HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

This section investigates HSIs whose Hispanic enrollments are 60% or higher—well above the 25% threshold for designation as an HSI. We chose this number because we believed that, with well over half of their student body being Hispanic, these institutions would be most likely to have Hispanic-focused initiatives. We selected a sample of five HSIs. This sample contains two-year public, four-year public, and four-year private colleges and universities from five states.

West Hills College in Coalinga, California, has a large portion of Hispanic students coming from unfavorable circumstances. According to the school's website:

Almost half (48 percent) of county residents are Hispanic, and of these, 28 percent are impoverished, 43 percent are low-income, 47 percent have less than a high school diploma, and only 7 percent have earned a bachelor's or higher degrees. Coalinga's Hispanic and low-income students share this disadvantage but also recognize the value of education.

In its Title V funding proposal from fiscal year 2013, West Hills sought money to improve its access for Hispanic students, specifically its distance education program. Its plan works toward training more faculty and web-based support for its distance education program. This approach to learning can be an attractive option for many Hispanics because of the flexibility distance education offers.

West Hills College at Coalinga also supports the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program, a federally funded program targeting low-income and first-generation college students, and disabled students. Another student organization on campus is the Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlan (Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan, M.E.Ch.A.), a national organization of Chicano students that grass-roots movement as a vehicle for social justice.



LUNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO

TYPE

2-Year, Public

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

73.7%

SIZE

906

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

1% Asian	1% American Indian or Alaska Native
1% Black or African American	21% white
74% Hispanic	
0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

31%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

Open Enrollment

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

60%

Luna Community College is the only community college located in northeastern New Mexico and serves many students through its satellite campuses ("About Luna," n.d.). According to the U.S. DoE, "LCC serves more than 1,800 students annually through its main campus in Las Vegas, three outreach centers and two satellite campuses. This vast, rural, 69 percent Hispanic service area is characterized by high poverty and low educational attainment" (U.S. DOE, 2012).

In Luna's 2012 proposal for Title V funding, it sought to broadly improve campus facilities and add academic programs, with the goal of increasing Hispanic enrollment and to better serve Hispanic students. In its proposal, LCC argued that:

Achieving activity objectives will result in enrollment increases of 41 percent in the target programs, or 370 new students, and will allow three programs to earn national accreditation, which will improve student earning potential. We also invest in important data software that will enable us to better serve our students, work more productively, and base critical decisions on timely accurate data (Luna Community College, 2012).

However, other than the school's involvement in the Title V grant, our search of LLC's website revealed no other initiatives aimed at serving its Hispanic population.

Hispanics dominate the enrollment figures at **Morton College**. Even though the school has not recently been awarded a Title III or V grant, it has done several things to promote a visible Latino culture on its campus and provide opportunities for its Hispanic students. Morton has planned several events around National Hispanic Heritage Month, thereby encouraging diversity and providing opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with the Hispanic culture. Morton has also put on several Latino-influenced art shows ("Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration," n.d.).

MORTON COLLEGE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

TYPE

2-Year, Public

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

82.8%

FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

2,672

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

1% Asian	0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
1% Black or African American	1% American Indian or Alaska Native
74% Hispanic	21% white

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

42%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

Open Enrollment

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

6%

BORICUA COLLEGE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

TYPE

4-Year, Private

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

83%

FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

1,050

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

0% Asian	0% American Indian or Alaska Native
15% Black or African American	1% white
83% Hispanic	
0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

86%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

Open Enrollment

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

88%

Additionally, Morton College was selected to participate in a Latino Policy Forum. Several Morton College administrators were chosen to attend the forum to advance their skills in order to better serve their Hispanic population. In regards to the Latino Policy Forum, Morton College's Dean of Student Development stated in a news release (2013), "It will offer us an opportunity to develop additional leadership skills and provide networking opportunities to help us get additional services for our students. Also, we can promote Morton College as a Hispanic Serving Institute and better connect with the population we serve."

One of the first HSIs to be federally designated as such, **Boricua College** has four locations in New York City. Despite being eligible for Title III and V funding, Boricua College does not receive funding. Its three-part mission statement addresses its dedication to its Puerto Rican origins, to providing its students with a liberal arts education, and to being an innovative institution focused on non-traditional learning.

Regarding its Puerto Rican roots, Boricua College states:

...the College seeks to strengthen Boricua culture through a bilingual, bicultural approach to all learning, and special course offerings in Puerto Rican history, art and culture. At the same time the institution focuses many of its learning activities on understanding and finding solutions to problems facing Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking people in America, and aims to prepare students for effective leadership in their communities in future years (Boricua College, n.d.).

Boricua College also offers program and events for the surrounding Latino community, including regular Spanish choir performances, poetry readings, and art exhibits ("Community Services," n.d.). Moreover, Boricua College supports an Upward Bound program, a part of the TRiO program.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS – PAN AMERICAN

EDINBURG, TEXAS

TYPE

4-Year, Public

UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVING PELL GRANTS

64%

FTE UNDERGRADUATE HISPANIC ENROLLMENT

90%

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

19

FTE UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

14,778

LATINO INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WITH FACULTY STATUS

33%

FALL 2013 STUDENT RACE & ETHNICITY

1% Asian	0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
1% Black or African American	0% American Indian or Alaska Native
88% Hispanic	3% white

As a four-year public university, the **University of Texas – Pan American** (UTPA) campus serves a student body that is 90% Hispanic. UTPA is interested in encouraging its students to transfer their experiences from the classroom and apply them to off-campus experiences. Its grant proposal for Title V funding suggested an increase in experiential learning (UTPA, 2013):

The program will engage and develop faculty teaching at the first-year level to incorporate service-learning components into first-year courses. The program will support and expand undergraduate research opportunities and study abroad for sophomore and junior year experiences, and emphasize internships and capstone experiences in the senior year.

This program provides Hispanic students with the opportunity to expand their learning experiences beyond the classroom and strengthen students' research and work skills.

In addition to its experiential initiatives, UTPA has many programs and organizations targeting Latinos. One example is the Latino Theater Initiative (LTI), which promotes Latinos' involvement with theater at UTPA ("Latino Theater Initiative," n.d.). LTI has won numerous awards and has traveled the country to promote its projects and Hispanic heritage.

Another way UTPA has served Hispanics is through a partnership between Harvard's Kennedy School of Public Leadership's Latino Leadership initiative. This plan encourages Latino students to participate and learn valuable leadership experiences from prominent American leaders ("Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative," n.d.).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES

Our examination of both Emerging and Existing HSIs reveals the potential the schools have for serving Latinos through funding opportunities and incentives. On the one hand, federal stipulations position Existing HSIs with the opportunity to apply for and receive funding that could provide support and cultural initiatives for their Hispanic enrollment, while at the same time offering Emerging HSIs with the monetary incentive of obtaining similar status.

For instance, Laney College and the University of Texas—Pan American, examples of Existing and Emerging HSIs, both advertised programs that serve their Latina/o students. Laney's Puente and carpentry programs provide academic and vocational training for their students. The University of Texas – Pan American has launched similar initiatives as it partners with Harvard to explicitly improve the leadership and business skills of its Hispanic students. As a result, these two colleges offer cases in point of what HSIs can provide in terms of support for their students.

On the other hand, contrary to the potential for success that a few HSIs have demonstrate, our sample has also shown that despite the enrollment numbers, Emerging and Existing HSIs have not demonstrated, to a high degree, supportive and cultural initiatives for their Latina/o students. For example, all five Emerging HSIs provided very little supportive and cultural initiatives that would indicate a potential for these schools to further increase these efforts if they became official HSIs. The same may be true for the Existing HSIs, as they propose and submit ideas to cater to their Hispanic enrollment. Most of the programs that are provided—for instance, Luna's distance education program, and the colleges that support TRIO programs—do not specifically target the Latina/o population of their schools. These programs can be taken advantage of by others.

As a result, this report, by examining the institutional websites, provides a broad overview of what the schools advertise to potential and current students. We urge Hispanic-Serving Institutions to ask themselves how they 'serve' Latinos and make that service more apparent.

Although the institutions' websites can offer a chance to examine Latina/o targeted initiatives from a public perspective, it by no means can be comprehensive in detailing all that they offer to their population. In summary, more research should be done on this cadre of institutions to further examine the cultural and academic programs that they offer to serve their Hispanic students. Below, we suggest several recommendations in light of these findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Once Emerging HSIs reach the 25% threshold, there should be a probationary period that limits their Title V eligibility and requires them to show measured steps taken in serving their Latino populations and maintaining their enrollment figures.
2. Institutions that currently qualify as Emerging HSIs and that are interested in becoming designated as HSIs should consider developing a three-year plan for recruiting Hispanic students and sustaining their Hispanic enrollment figures.
3. The federal government would benefit from compiling a list of all current HSIs in order to ensure they satisfy the 25% requirement, while doing yearly reviews to ensure institutions continually meet the expectations set forth by such a designation.
4. The federal government, in collaboration with organizations such as Excelencia in Education and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, should arrange a set of basic requirements for institutions to follow in order to sustain a Latino culture on campus as long as the institution is designated as an HSI. For example, there could be a required percentage of Latino faculty members at HSIs, and institutions could be held accountable for providing programs that enhance Latino student success.
5. Emerging HSIs should partner with established HSIs to create a “mentorship” program that creates a working relationship to further pertinent initiatives and Latino culture at their respective institutions.



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