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Graphic by Annie Esposito
Welcome from UPTE-CWA’s President

Dear UPTE-CWA member,

UPTE-CWA is a democratic, member-run organization that is strong because of the thousands of members, like yourself, who have made a commitment to support it. The union is all of us working together for better jobs. UPTE strives to promote the best possible working conditions at the University of California, the community colleges, and the Department of Energy laboratories.

As a union, we have accomplished much together. We have won guaranteed raises in all our contracts, often exceeding those of other employees. We have protected our benefits and retirement despite management’s efforts to make cuts. We have made many improvements in job security, health and safety, and other issues that are important to our members.

A strong and engaged membership makes for a powerful union that is an effective voice in the workplace. We need to ensure that all employees covered by our contracts sign up for membership. Even though everyone is covered by our contracts, only members have a voice and contribute to our successes. Signing up for membership makes us eligible for all union benefits, many of which are described in this booklet.

We invite you to get involved in UPTE at whatever level you are able. That could mean anything from keeping yourself informed and talking with colleagues about the issues, to signing up a colleague for union membership, to running for elected leadership positions in our union. Your participation at any level is welcome.

I have been employed at UC San Diego as a Staff Research Associate for many years. I enjoy both my work in the Department of Psychiatry and in helping lead our union as part of UPTE’s elected governing board.

UPTE is committed to making a better workplace for us all. Please don’t hesitate to call upon our union activists and leaders with any questions or concerns. You can find information about contracts, negotiations, a calendar listing of membership meeting times, and more, on UPTE’s website at <upte.org>.

In solidarity,

Jelger Kalmijn
UPTE-CWA president and UC staff research employee (UCSD)
P.S. I welcome your comments and suggestions. I can be reached at <president@upte-cwa.org> or at (510) 704-8783.
UPTE-CWA Member Benefits

A say in your union
Members set the bargaining and other priorities and elect our leadership. By joining, you have a voice in how we allocate our resources and in the politics of the union. Non-members pay union fees but have no say. Strong membership translates to better contracts. A large membership lets our employers know that members care about our union and the contracts we negotiate.

Member information and education
UPTE sends bulletins to our members that include important workplace information. This resource book helps you navigate the basics of your union and your employment. Our extensive member training program offers classes at all locations (see <upte.org/academy> or page 14 of this booklet).

Union cell phone discount & buying programs
The Union Plus program <www.unionplus.org> offers a variety of services at discount rates, from insurance and credit cards to movies and flower delivery. You can also sign up for a substantial monthly discount on your AT&T cell phone service.

Union Affiliates Mortgage Program
Many UPTE members have refinanced or bought homes using the Union Plus Mortgage Program at <www.unionplus.org>. They have found the rates to be competitive and the staff to be very helpful.

CWA scholarships
Our national union, CWA, offers college scholarships for members and children of members. Go to <www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne> to apply.

Hardship support
If you are laid off, on strike, or out on long-term disability, many union-affiliated programs can help you pay some bills or provide food contributions. Contact your local UPTE office to get assistance.

Union members at an organizing workshop.
UPTE-CWA’s Mission

We are 15,000 employees at the University of California, its affiliated Department of Energy laboratories, and adjunct faculty at California community colleges, working together to improve our wages and conditions, and to protect our hard-earned benefits.

We’re a member-run union
UPTE is run by its members to provide a voice in our workplace. We run our own union from top to bottom. Union members make the decisions and communicate with co-workers. Volunteer union representatives and “zone contacts” keep co-workers informed about issues and connected to activities. Members serve as contract negotiators and representatives. UPTE provides training to all members so we can carry out our mission (see UPTE Academy, page 14).

Our union’s strength directly reflects our membership strength. Workers do not automatically become members when they are hired. UPTE’s contracts cover everyone but only members contribute to our success and obtain full membership benefits. Employers assume that only those who join the union care about improving their workplace, and they assess our strength from the participation of our members.

Union contracts that protect our rights
UPTE has three contracts with the University of California, three for California community college adjunct faculty, and one at the Lawrence Livermore National Lab. These contracts are negotiated about every three years, setting wages and all other working conditions.

Organizing among other UC employees
UPTE includes more than 1,000 members who are not covered by a union contract, but who work at one of the UC campuses or national laboratories. Some are administrative professionals at UC; others come from among the thousands of employees at the Livermore and Los Alamos National Labs. We work with these members to improve all aspects of their work lives, including helping them organize so they can win collective bargaining rights and eventually negotiate union contracts.

National union affiliation: CWA
UPTE is affiliated with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which has provided tremendous organizing, bargaining and legislative support. CWA is a part of the national union federation, the AFL-CIO. UPTE-CWA also participates in the county and state bodies of the AFL-CIO.
What’s in a Union Contract?

A union contract describes the wages and working conditions mutually agreed to by UPTE-CWA and the employer. The union wants the best possible contract, while the employer often seeks to limit raises, benefits, job security and other improvements.

Most of UPTE’s contracts extend for three years. Typically, our contracts include an annual raise for all employees. You can review the details online:

- UC Researchers (RX unit): <unte.org/contract-rx> including Staff Research Associates, Marine Techs, Museum Scientists, Clinical Research Coordinators
- UC Technical Employees (TX unit): <unte.org/contract-tx>, including Lab Assistants, Animal Techs, Theater Employees, Mechanicians, Electronic Techs, Environmental Health and Safety Techs
- UC Health Care Professionals (HX unit): <unte.org/contract-hx>, including Clinical Lab Scientists, Pharmacists, Social Workers, Case Managers, Dieticians, Nuclear Med Techs
- Butte Community College: <unte.org/contract-butte/final.pdf>
- College of the Sequoias: <unte.org/contract-cos/final.pdf>
- Mt. San Jacinto Community College: <unte.org/contract-msjc/final.PDF>
- Skilled Trades at Lawrence Livermore National Lab: <unte.org/contract-st>

Members make us strong
How do we make sure we win the best possible contract? Through membership involvement. That means everything from simply joining the union, to participating in workplace actions, to supporting bargaining or legislative goals.

Become more active in UPTE – volunteer, become a union steward (we provide training), run for an elected position – or anything in between.

UPTE’s bargaining team for the College of the Sequoias.

Negotiating improvements
UPTE members are elected to serve on the bargaining teams that negotiate our contracts. We also elect mobilizing committees that inform and involve members in advocating for improvements in support of the bargaining teams. The union’s priorities in negotiating our contracts are set by our members. Before negotiations, UPTE conducts a survey, as well as campus and statewide conferences, at which members discuss and vote on what the union’s priorities will be.
Union Contract Basics: How Do I Get a Raise?

UPTE wins annual raises in the contracts that we negotiate with management. For those without a union contract, we don’t have the tool of bargaining but we can nevertheless advocate.

UPTE-CWA has won increases that far exceed those given to non-union employees. Our raises have many times over paid for the union dues we pay. We have done much to alleviate pay inequities that existed when we first unionized. As a result, recruitment and retention of quality staff have also improved.

![Graph showing the comparison of UPTE-represented wages to unrepresented wages, with a shaded area highlighting a $50,000 total income difference over 10 years.](image)

Raises come in many different forms:

- **Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA):** An annual increase that is supposed to keep us even with inflation.

- **Step increases:** Longevity steps that move us up in the pay range as our years of service increase.

- **Merit increases:** General funding made available for raises, but often awarded in an arbitrary manner that may or may not reflect the quality of our work. These increases are sometimes the only (if any) form of pay raise available when workers have no union contract.

- **Equity increases:** Individuals can petition for an equity increase based on being paid less than others doing the same work either under the same employer or under other similar employers. This can sometimes affect entire job classifications. Employees may also pursue equity increases to address sustained significant increases in workload.

- **Supplemental pay:** There are many different forms, including flex time for adjunct faculty, “incentive” (there are many different names for these) awards at UC medical centers, and others.

To see which raises apply to you, look at your contract or contact UPTE (see page 16). UPTE regularly holds wage workshops through the UPTE Academy (see page 14).
Union Contract Basics: Medical Benefits

UPTE-CWA advocates for an expansion of Medicare so that everyone will have medical coverage, independent of their employer. The Affordable Care Act expanded coverage but still left many with an obligation to purchase health care that they could not afford and to which their employers may not have contributed. In the US, we spend more of our hard-earned wages on medical care, with worse public health outcomes than any other developed nation. Between insurance company profits, price gouging providers and highly lucrative pharmaceuticals, not enough is left to actually keep us healthy.

Until we achieve the broader goal of the expansion of Medicare, we negotiate with our employers to achieve the highest quality affordable health care.

In the UC system, we have preserved relatively high quality, affordable care. At the Lawrence Livermore Lab, privatization has eroded those benefits somewhat, and at the community colleges, adjunct faculty do not receive medical benefits.

At all locations where benefits are offered, there is an annual open enrollment period when you can change your plan. We suggest you carefully review the plans before selecting the one most appropriate for you. Make sure that the providers you wish to see are covered by the plan that you select. Be aware that your costs may vary considerably if you add your spouse or children to your coverage. If the employer cannot adequately answer your questions, contact your union local. As each of us has different family configurations, medical needs and financial flexibility, there is no one best plan for everyone.

UC and Livermore also offer dental and vision insurance plans. Many dentists do not accept HMO insurance so make sure you can identify a provider that works for you. UC also has a legal insurance plan that may be helpful, although one limitation is that you can’t use it in legal action to protect your job or in any other dispute with UC.

Non-career employees have only partial access to these benefits. Check your contract to find out what you are eligible for.

UPTE members Wendi Felson, Mercedes Garcia-Mohr and Dieskau Reed at a UC regents’ meeting.
Disability insurance is for illnesses or injuries not related to your work. (If you are injured at work, you’d be covered under workers’ compensation.) If you have sick leave in your contract, you can use it for 100% of your salary. You can also use vacation leave to supplement your sick leave.

UC does not participate in the state disability plan and instead insures itself. UC pays for short-term disability insurance, which provides up to 55% of your pay to a maximum of $800 per month. You become eligible for this insurance after a 7-day waiting period and it lasts for up to 6 months. You must use 22 days of sick or vacation days before being eligible (yes, this makes the 7-day waiting period meaningless!).

You can buy additional short-term and long-term disability insurance, which provides up to 60% of your pay to a maximum of $15,000 per month. UPTE recommends that you seriously consider signing up for both additional disability programs. You never know when you will need it and you can’t sign up later.

Lawrence Livermore Lab participates in the state disability insurance program, which provides 55% of your salary or up to $1,129 per month for up to a year. The lab also offers a supplemental disability program that provides up to 70% income replacement.

Adjunct faculty are covered under the state disability program.

Information about California’s disability program can be found at: <www.edd.ca.gov/disability>.

UPTE Berkeley’s members meet each month to discuss workplace and union issues.
Union Contract Basics: Career Development

**Job training:** Generally the employer must provide any required job training on work time. We have placed special emphasis on safety training.

At UC campuses, UPTE members have the right to 40 hours of paid job-related training each year. You can take classes through staff development, regular UC classes at one-third the regular cost, or outside classes. Schedule your training with your supervisor. While UC is not required to pay for your training, in many cases your supervisor will agree to it.

At Lawrence Livermore Lab, skilled trades members may be eligible for complete tuition and/or fee reimbursement.

Check UPTE’s website <upte.org> for contract specifics on training and educational leave, which are specific to each represented unit.

**Upward reclassification at UC:** Job titles usually have several levels – for instance, Staff Research Associate I through IV, or Assistant Lab Mechanician to Principal Lab Mechanician. As you increase your level of responsibility, take on more complex duties, or coordinate the work of additional co-workers, you may be eligible for a reclassification to higher level, or even to a different job title. It is helpful to get your supervisor’s support for a reclass, but it’s not required. A reclassification usually brings a raise of at least 4% – sometimes more, depending on how you negotiate. See UPTE’s reclassification page at <www.upte.org/reclass.html> for details.

**Apply for tenured positions at community colleges:** UPTE encourages adjunct faculty to apply for open tenure-track positions. Many of our members have successfully obtained such a promotion. At College of the Sequoias, the union has even won rights for represented faculty to be interviewed for any open position they qualify for. Newly passed legislation requires community college management to bargain over part-time, temporary faculty assignments, taking into account how long part-time faculty have served at their school, the number of courses they have taught, and their evaluations.

**Union training:** UPTE has an extensive training program for many union skills including bargaining, organizing, arbitration, health and safety, and more. The classes are free to members. See <upte.org/academy>.
Union Contract Basics: Health & Safety

We want to create a workplace where no one is injured. UPTE places a strong emphasis on training and prevention, but also wants to ensure that anyone who does sustain a workplace injury receives all appropriate and fair treatment and compensation.

**Step 1:** Everyone should submit a letter to your employer pre-designating your physician in case of workplace injury. If you don’t, the employer can force you to see its doctor of choice, which could affect your care and your benefits. The appropriate form can be downloaded from the UPTE website at [upte.org/stewards/physicianform.pdf](http://upte.org/stewards/physicianform.pdf). Submit it to your HR department.

Over the course of bargaining UPTE’s contracts, we have won significant measures to prevent workplace accidents. Tragically, some of these improvements were won after one of our members at UC Los Angeles, Sheri Sangji, suffered fatal burns in a 2008 lab fire. We have redoubled our efforts to make sure that such a catastrophe never happens again.

After UPTE publicized several incidents, Sangji’s case being the worst, our employers were forced to become more responsible in creating a safer workplace. Even with that acknowledgment, we continue to take a very proactive approach because, since we are the people actually doing the work, we are usually the first victims.

You must receive all necessary health and safety training for your position before being expected to perform your duties. All hazardous materials have a MSDS (material safety data sheet) that specifies the dangers and required procedures. The MSDS must be available to you.

Our workplaces contain a wide variety of hazards including ergonomic, chemical, biological, radioactive and more. Carefully review the health and safety language in your union contract (at [upte.org](http://upte.org)). It provides you with many protections. The employer has an obligation to provide you with adequate training and personal protective equipment.
Union Contract Basics: Diversity & Respect

We work in a diverse workplace. The breadth of our personal and cultural experiences enriches us all.

The challenges of discrimination and harassment unfortunately intrude even where we have the highest of aspirations at work and in our union. We do not live in an idyllic, isolated bubble.

UPTE seeks to prevent inappropriate activity and speech through education. We encourage our employers to provide training to all employees and especially to supervisors and managers. Our contracts have special provisions forbidding discrimination and harassment.

If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment, here are some resources:

- **File an UPTE grievance:** take a look at the non-discrimination and fair and respectful treatment articles in your contract, and contact your UPTE local.

- **Contact California’s Fair Employment and Housing Administration (FEHA) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).** These agencies have a wealth of helpful information at their websites: <www.dfeh.ca.gov> and <www.eeoc.gov>.

- **UC Ombuds office:** This has serious limitations because UC protects supervisors to protect the university from lawsuits.

You may also contact your local UPTE representative for advice (see page 16).
Law & Politics

What happens in Sacramento and Washington, DC, has as much impact on our working lives as the contracts UPTE negotiates.

When the California governor wants to water down pension plans and retiree health benefits, it will greatly limit what UPTE can win at the bargaining table. State laws and the Education Code directly dictate many rights and benefits for community college employees such as our associate faculty members.

When Washington, DC, does not adequately fund research or changes health care reimbursements to hospitals, our members feel the effects through layoffs and workload. UPTE has a legislative program to influence these laws and decision makers.

Each year we set our legislative priorities. With each of the campaigns we decide on, we have to identify and recruit favorable and effective legislators.

In recent years, we have successfully lobbied for additional funds for higher education, job security for associate faculty, and audits of management.

The easiest way to contribute to our legislative efforts is sign up for UPTE’s Political Action Fund at <www.upte.org/lp/PAF.html>. UPTE does not use union dues or fees to support candidates. This fund is how we help elect candidates that will act as legislative advocates for our members. You can sign up for as little as $5 per month.

We encourage our members to learn about and get involved in legislative advocacy. UPTE always wants more people to walk the corridors of the state and national capitol to push for our members’ needs and priorities. Contact UPTE’s legislative director if you are interested: <legislative@unte-cwa.org>.

UPTE and CWA members lobby together on a bill to help UPTE’s part-time faculty at community colleges.
What If I Need Help?

UPTE has extensive experience in resolving workplace problems. Member stewards assist other members to find answers to their questions, and meet with management to find solutions.

Here are some basic points to remember:

- If you have a question or a problem, contact the steward in your area or call UPTE immediately (see Contacting UPTE, page 16). Remember: you may have only a 30-day timeline to address your issue.

- You have the right to representation at any meeting with management that may lead to discipline. These are called your Weingarten Rights, after a Supreme Court case of the same name. See <upte.org/weingarten.html> for details.

- Finding solutions through dialogue and pressure on management almost always works more quickly and efficiently than relying only on the formal grievance process. Do both!

- Inform yourself by reading the relevant contract provisions.

- Get support from your co-workers — they are often your strongest asset.

UPTE conducts trainings at three different levels: Basic Rights (a lunch-time training), Stewards (one weekend-day), Arbitration (two weekend days). Sign up for training on the UPTE Academy website <upte.org/academy> (see page 14). If there is sufficient interest, a training will be set up even if it is not already scheduled.

More detailed information, forms and tools are available on the UPTE website at <upte.org/stewards>.
UPTE Academy: Know Your Rights

Learning your rights and how to help yourself and your co-workers can make a world of difference. UPTE offers members basic to advanced training to prepare them to bargain, arbitrate, lobby, and organize.

It’s called the UPTE Academy, and you can see the course listings at <upte.org/academy>. Here’s a sampling of the classes.

- **Bargaining Training.** Learn all aspects of bargaining, from UPTE’s democratic process of deciding on priorities and electing member negotiators, to writing and presenting proposals.
- **Know Your Rights.** An introduction to how to research workplace rules and solve problems. This class is often held over lunch or immediately after work.
- **Steward Training.** Learn how to help your coworkers with workplace problems. Identify possible contract violations. Upon completion, stewards will be able to participate in grievance meetings with the support of a mentor.
- **Reclassification.** Learn how to submit your own reclassification request. Changes in your job assignment and level of independence at work play a key role. The union provides sample job descriptions to help you rewrite yours.
- **Wage Workshop.** Learn about equity increases, incentive awards, reclassification, and more ways you can get a raise.
- **Media Training.** Do you want to know how to get media attention? Come learn the tools of the trade!
- **Health and Safety Training.** Learn about your rights and UC’s responsibilities under OSHA.
- **Lobbying.** Learn how to identify a legislative goal and turn it into a bill for presentation in Sacramento or Washington, DC.
- **Student Debt Clinic.** Learn about government programs that can reduce your monthly student loan payments and eliminate them altogether.

*Lisa Kermish (standing) leads an UPTE-sponsored Student Debt Clinic. Co-facilitator Herbert Serrano is on her right.*
Web Resources

Benefits
- Butte Community College: www.butte.edu/hr/benefits
- College of the Sequoias: www.cos.edu/About/HumanResources
- LLNL: benefits.llnl.gov
- Mt. San Jacinto College: www.msjjc.edu/HumanResources
- UC: atyourservice.ucop.edu

Benefits, union
- CWA scholarships: www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne
- Union bookstore: Powell’s: www.powells.com
- UnionPlus: www.unionplus.org

Discrimination
- Cal. Dept. of Fair Employ/Housing: www.dfeh.ca.gov

Health and safety
- Cal OSHA: www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/
- OSHA (federal): www.osha.gov/

Rights at work
- Grievance info and tools: www.upte.org/stewards
- Know Your Rights: www.upte.org/rights.html
- Pre-designating a physician: www.upte.org/stewards/physician.html
- Reclassification: www.upte.org/stewards/reclass.html

UC workers without a contract
- APs for UPTÉ: www.apsforupte.org

Unions
- AFL-CIO: www.aflcio.org
- AFSCME (UC service/patient care): www.local3299.org
- California Federation of Labor: www.calaborfed.org
- CNA (UC nurses): www.calnurses.org
- CWA (UPTE’s national union): www.cwa-union.org
- New Mexico Federation of Labor: www.nmfl.org
- Teamsters (UC clericals): www.teamsters2010.org
- UAW (UC student workers): www.uaw2865.org
- UC-AFT (UC lecturers & librarians): www.uc-aft.org
- UPTE-CWA: www.upte.org

UPTE-CWA contracts
- Butte Community College: www.upte.org/contract-butte/final.pdf
- College of the Sequoias: www.upte.org/contract-cos/final.pdf
- LLNL Skilled Trades: www.upte.org/contract-st
- UC Health Care Professionals (HX unit): www.upte.org/contract-hx
- UC Researchers (RX unit): www.upte.org/contract-rx
- UC Technical Employees (TX unit): www.upte.org/contract-tx
Contacting UPTE-CWA

If you have a question about your rights, or want to get more involved with the union, please contact your UPTE local.

**UPTE systemwide**
2855 Telegraph Ave, #310
Berkeley, CA 94705
(510) 704-8783 p
(510) 704-8065 f
info@upte-cwa.org

**Local 1 (UCB)**
2510 Channing Way, Suite 10
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 848-8783 p
(510) 848-8786 f
upte/local1@igc.org

**Local 2 (UCLA)**
1015 Gayley Ave., Suite 301
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 443-5484 p
(310) 443-5487 f
uptela@netwood.net

**Local 3 (UCSC)**
501 Mission St, Suite 11
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 429-8783 p
(831) 425-0821 f
upte@upte-cwa.org

**Local 4 (UCSB)**
900 Embarcadero del Mar, Suite C
Isla Vista, CA 93117
(805) 685-3661 p
(805) 685-3666 f
upte@upte-cwa.org

**Local 5 (UCR)**
5005 LaMart, 100 B#1
Riverside, CA 92507
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(951) 781-7926 f
upte-5@pacbell.net

**Local 6 (UCD)**
1772 Picasso, Ste C
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 759-0803 p
(530) 759-0805 f
davisadmin@upte-cwa.org

**Local 7 (UCSF)**
1498 Ninth Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94122
(415) 753-8783 p
(415) 753-8010 f
uptesf@gmail.com

**Local 8 (UCI)**
3848 Campus Drive #118,
Newport Beach, CA 92660
(949) 223-5400 p
(949) 223-5401 f
uptec@upte-cwa.org

**Local 9 (UCSD)**
8380 Miramar Mall, Suite 227
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**Local 10 (Merced)**
731 E. Yosemite Ave.
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uptelocal10@gmail.com

**Local 11 (LLNL/SPSE)**
PO Box 1066
Livermore, CA 94551
(925) 449-4846 p
(925) 449-4851 f
spse@spse.org

**Local 12 (Butte College)**
c/o UPTE systemwide
2855 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 310
Berkeley, CA 94705
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(530) 704-8065 f
butte@upte-cwa.org

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**Local 14 (Mt. San Jacinto College)**
1281 N. State Street, Suite A
San Jacinto, CA 92583
951-218-6930
msjc@upte-cwa.org

**Local 184 (LBNL)**
PO Box 4247
Berkeley, CA 94704
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(510) 704-8065 f
upte@upte-cwa.org

**Local 1663 (LANL)**
127 Eastgate Dr Suite 212G
Los Alamos, NM 87544
(505) 603-9034 p
(510) 704-8065 f
lanl@upte-cwa.org
Cover photo: UPTE delegates to the Labor Notes convention in Detroit: 1st row (l-r): Ashley Mensing, Tim Smith, Aaron Miller; Middle row (l-r): Jelger Kalmijn, Shanna Velzo, Jamie McDole, Lisa Kermish; Top row (l-r): Judy Scarborough, Elizabeth Wilks, Marcos Jimenez. The annual conference allows UPTE activists to share ideas with others in the national labor movement.

University Professional & Technical Employees Communications Workers of America Local 9119 AFL-CIO

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