A message from Dean Frank Chong and Suzanne Lo, Asian Coalition Co-Chairs.

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We wish you a happy and prosperous new year! As the incoming co-chairs of Asian Coalition, we wanted to update you on several important and exciting projects:

Establishment of the Asian Pacific American Student Success Workgroup

The workgroup is comprised of APA administrators, faculty, classified and students who are meeting once a month to identify the unmet needs of APA students at CCSF. We will be submitting recommendations to the Chancellor and to the Board of Trustees in Fall 2003. This workgroup is the first Pan Asian effort to assess the needs of APA students at CCSF (See attached concept paper). For more information, please contact Frank Chong or Laurie Newsletter

Creation of an AC Webpage

Nick Chang and Maria Ma have graciously agreed to help create an AC webpage. We are hoping to use the webpage as a vehicle to increase membership, better communicate with our members and offer updates of meetings, activities and events. If you have any suggestions, please contact Maria Ma at (415) 561-1815 (John Adams Campus).

Membership Drive

The executive board met last month and would like to increase the number of paid members to AC. We are forming a membership drive committee that will be responsible for recruiting new members and collecting dues for existing members. We are hoping to have a membership person at each campus, as well as contact persons for administrators, librarians, counselors, instructional faculty and classified staff. If you would like to volunteer or renew your membership, please contact Mark Fan, Membership Coordinator at 452-5438.

Frances Lee Retirement Party

Our fearless leader will be retiring after 22 years of service to the district. Please join us in celebrating her many years of service and achievement. The party will take place Friday, May 9th at the Chinatown Cultural Center of the Holiday Inn. For more information, please contact Virginia Jew at 239-3324.

Have a great Semester!
APA STUDENT NEEDS AT CCSF: MARGINALIZED AND INVISIBLE

I. Background

Asian Pacific Americans (APA) comprise over one third of the residents in the City and County of San Francisco. Of major urban centers, San Francisco has the highest percentage of APAs in the United States only surpassed by Honolulu. Over 40% of the APA population resides on the West Coast and in Hawaii. Over 2/3 of APA residents in America are immigrants (U.S. Census, 2000)

Asian Pacific American (APA) students comprise the largest number of students of color, including whites on the CCSF Campus. On the aggregate, when counting APA students, which includes Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Asian Indian and Pilipino, APA’s comprise 40% of the students enrolled at CCSF (CCSF Fact Sheet, 2002).

II. Needs Statement

While APA students are the largest number of students on campus, the needs and services to serve the unique needs of these students has been largely neglected. The reasons can be attributed to the following:

1. The Myth of the Model Minority

APA students have been stereotyped as being model students and therefore do not require additional support or services. In reality, there are many “at risk” APA students at CCSF. If one looks at currently applied student outcome measures, one may be surprised to learn the following alarming data about APA students at CCSF:

- **Basic Skills**: Over 1,100 APA students entering CCSF are placed in one or more basic skill either Math or English/ESL (F2000-SP2001)

- **ESL**: 70% of the credit ESL and 53% of the non-credit population at CCSF are APA

- **Probation**: Over 1800 APA students or 43% of all students on academic probation are APA (F2000-SP2001). Over 1,000 APA students or 38% of all students on progress probation are APA.

2. The Stereotype that all APAs are monolithic

Often APA students are “lumped together as being all the same. In fact, the APA communities while having many similarities also have many distinct differences. Studies have shown that certain Asian ethnic groups perform on the aggregate much higher than other Asian ethnic groups.

For example, Chinese, Korean and Asian Indians have shown to be high achievers, whereas, Laotian, Samoan and Filipinos have struggled in academic achievement. Variables such as income level and generational differences need to be factors that are considered in determining the unique needs of APA students (Hune and Chan, 1997).
3. The APA communities’ lack of political assertiveness to demand resources for its students can also be seen as a primary factor for inaction.

Up to 2/3 of the APA population are immigrants and English Learners, this makes it difficult for them to advocate for their needs. Culturally, historically and politically, the APA community has not been as assertive and strategic in articulating the needs of its students as other ethnic student groups on campus. This initiative is an attempt to articulate the needs of APA students to the college.

IV. Recommendations for Action

The College has implemented programs that are designed to improve the retention and success rates of Hispanic and African American students. We recommend that the college begin the process of developing and implementing a program to improve the retention and success rates of Asian and Pilipino students at City College of San Francisco.

In the College’s Strategic Plan under:

9.3 Provide leadership to staff in the development and implementation of an integrated program to improve the retention and success rates of Hispanic, Asian, Pilipino, and African American Students.

Specifically, we recommend the following:

1. Convene a steering committee comprised of students, faculty, administrators and faculty charged with developing a plan that would best serve APA students on campus.

2. The Steering Committee must be comprised of representatives from the various Asian Pacific American ethnic groups

3. The Steering Committee would meet regularly during the Spring Semester and submit a report with a set of recommendations to the Chancellor and the Board towards the later part of Spring Semester. We request that the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees look at these recommendations as a top priority and commit to allocating resources for implementation of recommendations.

4. It is the hope that the Program plan can begin implementation in Fall 2003.

5. The Steering Committee requires the full support of the College including the Board of Trustees, Chancellors Office, Senior administration and the Office of Research of Planning.

V. Conclusion

City College of San Francisco should be a leader in developing retention and student success programs for all its students. Given that Asian Pacific American (APA) students comprise the largest ethnic student group on campus, it would be worthwhile for the college to devote some time, energy and resources to study the academic and student service needs of APA students and to develop some plan of action to respond to these needs.
CCSF should not fall into supporting the myth of the APA student as being the model minority student. While certain APA students excel at CCSF, a closer examination of other APA students will reveal that many APA students are struggling academically.

CCSF prides itself in addressing the needs of its diverse student population. This proposal should be viewed as a positive proactive initiative that begins to respond to a part of the student body that has been largely invisible and ignored in the past.

VI. References

City College Fact Sheet 2002, Office of Public Information


U. S. Census 2000, Washington, D.C.

"The Eternal Empire: China's Ancient Kingdoms"

This summer the Study Abroad Programs Office will be offering a program entitled "The Eternal Empire: China's Ancient Kingdoms". This program will run from June 21 to July 8, 2003.

Participants will visit Beijing, Xi'an, Luoyang, Kaifeng, the Shaolin Temple, Kaifeng, Tai' an and Mount Tai, Qufu, and Shanghai. Three units of academic credit for Asia 1: Modern Pacific Asia will be awarded to those who successfully complete the course. The program will be led and taught by Bob Jones, an instructor at CCSF and an expert on Chinese art, anthropology and archeology. Professor Jones has led six fascinating programs throughout China and Mongolia for CCSF. For information and a program brochure, please visit www.ccsf.edu/studyabroad, or call Jill Heffron, Study Abroad Programs Coordinator at 239-3778 or come by Cloud Hall, Room R413.

Nomination for Outstanding Service

The Asian Coalition Executive Board decided to recognize CCSF Asian-Pacific Islander employees for their outstanding services to the students, the college district, and/or greater community. Each year AC will select one classified employee and one faculty member for recognition. We know that there are many deserving individuals who are the backbone of CCSF. Please send your nominations on the attached form to Co-Chair Suzanne Lo at the Ocean Campus, R413, by We Need Raffle Prizes!

Please remember that AC is also soliciting donations for Raffle prizes to be given away at the AC Scholarship Dinner. Call Scarlet Liu (Ocean Campus, 452-5287) or May Fong (561-1914) for your donation pick-up. You may also bring your raffle prizes on the night of the dinner (Friday, May 2).

Raffle prizes include: $500, $300, and $100 Savings Bonds.

Herbal Soup Recipes

If you missed the talk by Professor Lincoln Wong on nutritious soups to maintain and improve good health, you may obtain recipes from Eva Cheng (echeng@ccsf.edu).
Visiting Cuba was one of our dreams. So, during our winter break, My husband, Bob, and I packed up and left for Cuba with 33 other participants of CCSF's Study Abroad Program in Cuba.

Cuba means many things to many people. To most, Cuba is the United States’ 40-year-long embargo of the mysterious and impoverished island nation. But to many people, other images surface: the people, the arts, Afro-Cuban music and the Rumba, Buena Vista Social Club, the crumbling remains of those once-magnificent Spanish colonial buildings, Cuban cigars and dark rum, ancient American cars, Hemingway, Che, and Fidel! But, to Bob and me, we had conjured up a “Cuban Chinatown” after listening to our fathers talk about the once-largest Chinatown in Latin America. Their fascination with it fed our curiosity. So, a few days after our arrival in Cuba, we headed off in search of Chinatown, or Barrio Chino of Havana.

The Chinese cultural influence played a small part in the history of Cuba but it was no less colorful or vibrant than the dominant cultures of Cuba. We wanted to understand how Barrio Chino evolved, so we grabbed a couple of opportunities in our very hectic schedule and interviewed our local guide, Liset Cruz, and Juan Eng, a long time resident of Barrio Chino.

In the mid 19th Century, Chinese immigrants arrived in Cuba to replace the African slaves working in the lucrative sugar industry. It was a new type of slavery for even though they were considered indentured servants, most of the Chinese were never able to earn enough money to return to their country. This labor force grew to about 150,000. In 1874, a Chinese mandarin visited Cuba and protested the deplorable conditions of the contracts of the laborers. Later, a treaty banning these contracts but not the immigration, was signed in 1877. The Chinese whose contracts expired remained as free workers. Attracted by investment and trade opportunities, they stayed and survived through their own industriousness. During this period many Chinese from California, who were suffering under racial discrimination, joined their fellow countrymen and opened up small and medium-sized businesses in an area now known as Barrio Chino. This community was already established in 1858 around central Havana. This was the birth of Havana’s Chinese Section. Measuring 600 by 200 meters in size, it eventually became the largest and most famous Chinatown in Latin America, after Los Angeles.

During the sugar boom of the 1920s, many Cuban Chinese became wealthy. Barrio Chino flourished. There were over three hundred family associations and social clubs, which supported the elderly population as well as provided a source of communal ties. About a dozen newspaper publishing agencies printed out daily newspapers in Chinese. Bountiful baskets of fresh vegetables and fruits were sold daily. The community had all the amenities that reflected a genuine Chinese ambience. However, a shady element also entered the picture: Barrio Chino had its share of tong wars and opium dens, which were typical of Angeles and San Francisco.
The prosperity of Barrio Chino paved the way for the next wave of Chinese immigrants in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This group was seeking better economic prospects, too, but mainly they were escaping from China for another reason: they did not want to live under Communism. Ironically, they did not realize they were moving right into a political situation from which they had just fled. Following the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the majority of the Chinese population left Cuba for other parts of the world. The decline and decay of the city of Havana, of course, included Barrio Chino. What is left of it now is not enough to remind us of what once was.

During the recovery period following the Cuban economic crisis of the early 1990s, the Chinese decided to create a group to promote the cultural values of the Chinese community. It was supported by the Cuban government, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Chinese Embassy of the People’s Republic of China. Together, these three organizations promoted fairs, exhibitions, and held “Congresses” dealing with the Chinese culture. In 1995, the government of China agreed to help rebuild Chinatown by constructing a dragon gate on Calle Dragones, the main street into Barrio Chino. Presently, there is a push for an expansion of Chinatown because of the commerce it would generate for Havana as well as for the community. Chinatown worldwide has always been popular due to its restaurants and shops selling among other things, quaint curios and incense. Barrio Chino is no exception in this case, either. For Bob and me, the novelty was hearing Spanish being spoken instead of Chinese. The restaurants offer good food for reasonable prices, with sweet and sour dishes, egg rolls, fried wontons, chop suey, and pizza (yes, pizza) being the hot sellers. Strolling musicians playing popular Cuban music could be heard wafting through the doorways. Judging from all the activity we witnessed, Barrio Chino was on its way to being reborn.

The Barrio Chino we visited, interestingly enough, was only a few months old. New money sank into the construction of a three-block commercial section—a kind of a “Grant Avenue,” lined with brand new restaurants. All of them had an outdoor seating area through which one would enter the main dining room. What always made any Chinatown unique—the ubiquitous red, gold and green structures and decorations, the smells, the energy, even the sight of a mah jong game—were all there. Change the location and it could stand for any Chinatown in any part of the world, in appearance, that is.

During one of our lunches with our City College group, we went to a Chinese restaurant located a little off the beaten track of Barrio Chino. It was called the El Cantones. The dining room was well-appointed and immaculate. We were impressed, for it could put a few of our Chinese restaurants to shame. Eager to make our contact with a Cuban Chinese, we initially introduced ourselves to the cashier, who turned out to be the daughter of the proprietor. Since she could not speak Chinese except “Ni Hau Ma?”, she immediately called her father, Juan Eng, who was at home at the time. When we finally met, we liked him immediately. He was a quiet, handsome, unassuming man in his sixties. He was open and comfortable to talk with, which was important given the battery of questions we had planned to ask him. What turned out more meaningful was that he was from a village that was only two miles from my father’s village in Taishan,
As we interviewed Juan, we began to learn more and more about Barrio Chino and its people, past and present. In the interest of time, we boldly and pointedly asked him a host of questions, but manners dictated that we not be too personal for fear of putting him in a spot. He was extremely generous in his time with us, insisting that he really had nothing else to do, which was usually the case everyday, he said. His three children by his first marriage to a Cuban-Chinese woman were all grown and living on their own. He and his friends, the rest of what was left of the Eng families, could usually be seen playing mah jong at the Eng Family Association. Like him, most of them were of his generation who came to Cuba in the 1950s. They remained in Cuba largely because they did not have the money to leave after the revolution. Juan did not leave because his grandfather told him everything would be “good” after Fidel Castro took over. “Just wait and see,” his grandfather assured him. Juan stayed.

Juan told us of the economic incentives that had been recently offered to the Chinese community by the government. All the family associations in Barrio Chino were allowed to open private businesses. The purpose of this opportunity was not only to bring back the Chinese to the community but also to pump some much-needed hard cash into the Cuban economy. According to Juan, the State gets 4.5% of his profits from his restaurant. His family association keeps the rest which helps pay for the welfare of their senior citizens. His own waiters receive about eight dollars a day, plus tips. Out of the 300 some odd family associations and social clubs that once existed during the heydays of Barrio Chino, only thirteen remain today. Of the thirteen, eleven have opened businesses –nine restaurants (5 or 6 of them thriving well) and two small cafes. Two associations chose not to go into any kind of business because the members were either too few or too old to bother.

Sensing our curiosity and our eagerness know more about his community, Juan decided to lead us on a tour of Barrio Chino via a visit to five family associations and two social clubs. He felt this would be a good way to experience it. Indeed it was. He led us through several almost deserted areas, mostly walking on uneven, dusty roads. The buildings that housed these associations and the surrounding buildings along the way were typically gray and sadly dilapidated. Some were ornate with a hint of faded elegance about them. We visited the Eng, Wong, Lee, Louie, and the Lau Family Associations. At each location, Juan, the consummate host, introduced us to the members and/or the chairman, if he were present. Juan would explain our presence and then patiently wait for us to ask our questions and take our pictures. They were all gracious, intrigued, but not too curious to ask us questions. However, they all loved having their pictures taken.

*Visiting Barrio Chino, continued on next page....*
We started out on tour by visiting the Eng Association, of which Juan is the president. At the Eng Association, four men (of Juan’s generation) were intensely playing Mah Jong, the game of choice to kill all hours of the day. With a cigar clamped between their teeth, they simply nodded in acknowledgement of our presence. They are well, and content to live out their days doing what they enjoy the most. We continued on to the Wong Association, which had a bustling restaurant. “This is one of the busiest restaurants,” remarked Juan. “They’re making money.”

In the building, where the Lee Association is resides Mrs. Lee, a widow. A business was not opened here because most of the members had either passed on or left Cuba. She prefers to return to China where she visited last year, but is staying in Cuba to be with her married son in Havana. One would think she would be terribly lonely living in a cavernous building (with an exceptionally exquisite interior). However, she says she has her newspaper, her Mah Jong games, her son, and her friends to keep her occupied. An entrepreneurial side of her has evolved since the privatization of businesses was established – she makes egg noodles to sell to the new restaurants of Barrio Chino. She proudly showed off her “noodle machine,” a little tabletop, hand-crank variety. We could not help but admire her spunk.

Next, Juan led us to the Louie Association, which is, by far, the most successful of all the family association-restaurants. Historically, this association was started a couple of hundred years ago by three families, the Louies, Fongs and Kwongs. Hence, the name of this establishment is The Three Brothers and, as it turns out, it is a favorite of our tour guide, Liset! It occupies three floors. On the day we visited it, all three floors were packed with customers and a long line was waiting at the door. “It’s like this every day,” remarks Juan wistfully. My father would have been pleased.

The Lau Association restaurant was almost equally as busy, but with no lines outside. Like all the other Chinese eateries, this one offered not only Chinese food, but also pizza. Juan said they all offer what sells best, and these two fares are the Cubans’ favorites.

Along with the family associations, Juan introduced us to, we also went to look at a restaurant operated by a social club called the Chi Tack Tong. Unfortunately, we were not able to find out what kind of activities this social club had. However, we visited another interesting organization, with a restaurant, of course, named the Cuba Overseas Chinese Socialist Alliance. This was the only organization of a political nature that we experienced in Barrio Chino. The president, Mirta Echavarria, a Cuban-Chinese, showed us a little library where the community once and still could borrow books and current magazines from China. We recognized some of the old children’s classics as well as some with Chinese revolutionary themes. The most poignant scene was seeing the floor full of grocery bags. They were being assembled for the senior citizens of the community. We noticed the bags each contained a bottle of cooking oil, a small bag of rice, and some other small amount of dried foodstuff. This was the benevolent association, as we know it in our own Chinatown in San Francisco, the bulwark for the overseas Chinese. We later noted that the restaurant for this association had no business at the time we were there.

Today with fewer than 300 people of direct Chinese descent, the membership in these associations is small. With no more immigration from China, the likelihood of these associations surviving another generation is small. We only saw members of Juan’s age at these places. As in many of these associations in the U.S., the younger people are simply not interested in continuing these old bastions of fraternal support. Perhaps they have outlived their usefulness.

*Visiting Barrio Chino, continued on next page....*
Juan walked us back to the hotel, on yet another broken up, dirty street. “It wasn’t always like this,” he commented. He described the road that we were walking on used to be so grand – clean, wide, and beautifully lined with high-end stores along each side of the street. Reminiscing, he thinks of what could have been had he not listened to his grandfather. “I should have left with the others (other exiles after the Revolution),” he laments softly. He would be living in Boston now with his brother he said. “However, human beings adapt,” he said philosophically. Although Juan said that life in Cuba is generally hard, he has no real complaints about his own life, other than “I can’t get what I need for my restaurant, like tofu and Chinese produce.” “We’re all just getting by. I don’t regret anything. Besides, I like the weather here.” His last words to us were, “gin bo, hahng bo”. The literal translation is, “Meet step, walk step.” In short, “Take each step as you go along. That is your fate.” He is resigned to it.

Wait! There is more. My story does not end here. On our last day in Havana, we decided to go into Barrio Chino one more time – to take a few pictures of it. We were too busy to take any during our first two visits. As we were walking along, we noticed an open kitchen door of a restaurant. Curiosity got the best of us, so we peeked in. It was a large and very clean kitchen with lots of fresh vegetables piled high on one worktable and dishes and other ingredients on others. We spotted one Chinese person and, without hesitation, we brazenly called him out for a talk. His name was Tao Jin Rong from Shanghai, the proprietor of the only Shanghainese restaurant in all of Cuba. Now, we were really interested because we knew that all of the Chinese immigrants were originally from southern China. Was this an anomaly? Mr. Tao explained he immigrated to Cuba eight years ago. He was a former professor of design and art at Shanghai Jiaotong University, a very well-known university in China. Our brief acquaintance with him was enough to give us an impression that he was a confident, well-spoken and urbane man, and, more importantly, a very astute businessman.

Mr. Tao opened his restaurant six successful years ago. It is located on Cuchillo Street, the “Grant Avenue of Barrio Chino.” We noticed it right away because of its tasteful decorations with huge red lanterns and little banners with auspicious sayings on them. He named it Tien Tan, the Chinese translation for the Temple of Heaven, a famous landmark in Beijing. However, his logo bears the symbol for the Tao (Taoist) faith (a ying and yang symbol), which is also his namesake. He proudly informed us that he served “authentic” Shanghainese food and that business was extremely good. VIPs from all over Havana including people from the various Embassies have patronized his restaurant. He said he was still waiting for Fidel to drop in.
He easily gave us a glimpse of his personal life, although his marital status was not made clear to us. Mr. Tao has one daughter who came with him and is now married to a Cuban. Two other children, a son and another daughter live in Shanghai. He returns to Shanghai once or twice a year. With the airfare costing around $2,000, that is a hardship, even for him! When he is back in China, he arranges for all his supplies for his restaurant to be sent via the Cuban Embassy, which has offered free shipping every time. They ship not only foodstuff but furniture and other dry goods as well. This is a well-connected businessman – the quintessential Shanghai entrepreneur!

We reserved our last question for the end of our visit. “Why did you come to Cuba? Why did you choose to immigrate from one Communist country to another one? We did not expect a direct answer and we did not get one. In a not-so-uncommon, circuitous way to the point, this Chinese explained that he was seeking “freedom.” “Freedom to do what,” we asked. As an artist, he answered, Cuba provides a creative environment for him. “I love the weather and I love the music here.” We asked him if he had done any works of art since arriving in Cuba. “No,” he replied. “I’ve been too busy with this restaurant.” We had many questions for his answers but these questions would have put him in an awkward position, and we certainly did not want to do that. Later, while relating this particular episode to a friend back in San Francisco, our friend said that his indirect manner of speaking should have been our tip-off that Mr. Tao did not want to reveal too much of himself.

It was interesting to meet two diametrically different Chinese immigrants to Cuba. We do not know them well, but we do know they are of different minds and hearts. One yearns for the past and the other sees Cuba as the new frontier with opportunities. Will he represent the future of Cuba or will he represent Cuba’s modest economic reform that may undermine Fidel’s government control?

Our trip to Cuba was a culturally heady one, made richer by our experience in Barrio Chino. Be

JOIN the Asian Coalition

Prospective members: please fill out the attached membership form. Membership is only $10.00 a year.

Old members: please fill out the attached membership form, if you haven’t already paid for this year.

Chinese Orchestra Needs Your Instruments!

The members and families of a Buddhist Monastery have started a full Chinese orchestra for beginners, and are seeking donations of any "retired" traditional instruments that you (or anyone you know) may have, that can be donated. We are also in need of any bass/cello instruments. This is an enthusiastic group eager to learn and appreciate Chinese music, and has an equally enthusiastic teacher who volunteers his time and energy to teach. The group has just performed for senior citizens; future performances include Honoring our Parents, and Inter-faith and Peace assemblies. You and your family are also welcome to become members of this orchestra!

For more information, call Marion Kwan at 239-3395.

Tai Chi Class

There is a Tai Chi Class focusing specifically in the "internal aspects" of tai-chi. It is being held Thursday mornings in San Francisco at 7:30 am. Anyone interested can contact Marion Kwan at 239-3395.
NOMINATION FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE
To Recognize CCSF Asian Pacific Islander Classified & Faculty Members

I Nominate:

NAME:_________________________________________________________

POSITION:______________________________________________________

CAMPUS:_______________________________________________________

PHONE:_________________________E-MAIL:_________________________

Write a brief description of the nominee’s specific areas of service (students, college district, and/or greater community), and why you think he/she should be considered:

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Your Name (Nominator):_____________________________________________

Position:____________________________________________________________

Campus:_____________________________________________________________

Phone:_____________________________________________________________
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name:________________________________________________________
Campus:_____________________________________________________

Department:____________________________________________________
District Mail Box:____________________E-Mail:_______________________

Position: ___Administrator ___Classified ___Faculty ___Student ___Other (i.e. Community)
Home Address:________________________________________________________________________
City, ____________________________
Zip:__________________________________________

____ Phone (home):______________________________
(work):______________________________

Please indicate your interests and elaborate:
Cultural Activities
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________________________________________________________________________

District Matters:
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________________________________________________________________________

Political Issues:
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Professional Workshops:
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