

Let knowledge serve
the city



Serving the future

The title of our new strategic plan is apt: Let Knowledge Serve the City. There is no institution as committed to its motto as Portland State University. It's what we do.

We have built an international reputation for connecting learning and inquiry to the vibrancy of the urban region we are such a part of. Portland is unique among cities in its innovative approach to planning, civic engagement and awareness of the natural environment. It is deeply local in its culture—from close-knit neighborhoods to homegrown food and drink—yet it is perched at the edge of the Pacific Rim and participates on a global scale.

PSU reflects Portland's dynamism, and Portland State University plays a vital role in making it happen. We set new businesses in motion; we develop





forward-looking public policy; and most importantly we educate the region's thinkers and doers. This plan helps ensure we expand our mission of access, excellence and engagement.

We are fortunate to be part of a community recognized worldwide for its leadership on issues of sustainability and social justice. We are privileged to work from the advantage of a university—these incredibly resilient institutions that for centuries have harbored enlightenment, advanced the best of humanity and opened doors of opportunity to countless people.

To be sure, challenges abound. Among them are uncertain resources, socioeconomic shifts, and dramatic changes in the way knowledge is sought

and discovered. Rather than be daunted or divided by these challenges, we instead must embrace and prepare for them as we continue to lead.

It is in that spirit that I invite you to read, support and participate in this new strategic plan for PSU. It is through our collective work that we will continue to be an innovative, strong and excellent university, and this plan keeps us on that path.

Wim Wiewel

Wim Wiewel, President



INTRODUCTION



Portland State University occupies a unique position in Oregon and plays a crucial role in the metropolitan region that it serves. As the state's premier urban research and teaching university, we have a well-defined mission to positively impact Portland and the broader community through educational access, engagement with local partners and the expertise of our top-quality faculty and staff.

Founded in 1946 as a college for returning World War II veterans, PSU has matured into a comprehensive university that offers more than 200 degrees.

We have grown to become the most diverse public university in Oregon and one of its biggest.

We serve more than 28,000 students, including a significant number from historically marginalized and underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, students with disabilities, working parents, first-generation students, international students, veterans and returning students. We also attract a large percentage of students who transfer from community colleges or other universities. We are an access institution that offers a quality liberal arts education as well as professional, graduate and doctoral programs. We consider our diversity an integral part of how we define academic excellence.

We serve as an “anchor institution” for the Portland area, providing thousands of jobs, investing millions of dollars on capital projects and adding an estimated \$1.44 billion in annual economic impact. Portland continues to attract new residents, new businesses and new ideas. We will remain a strong partner in that growth as a vibrant center for learning,

scholarship, research, creativity, culture and workforce development.

Our reputation is on the rise. Because of our curriculum, faculty and dedication to community engagement, PSU is widely perceived as a national model for how universities can partner with their



cities to solve problems and improve quality of life. *U.S. News & World Report* in 2015 placed us on an elite list of the nation's “Most Innovative” universities. We are the only Oregon university—public or private—to make this list,

which includes Harvard, Stanford, MIT and other great universities. External funding for our research also has increased. In fiscal year 2015, we received sponsored awards totaling \$64.6 million, which represents an average increase of 8 percent per year over the past seven years.

Since July 2014, PSU has been governed by its own Board of Trustees—a change resulting from decentralization of Oregon's public university system and the dissolution of the State Board of Higher Education. The change has given us a broader degree of independence and ability to determine our own future. As part of this new direction, the board charged PSU President Wim Wiewel with drafting a new strategic plan to guide the University for the next five years and serve as a measuring stick for the board.

This plan, developed over the course of 18 months, includes input from hundreds of PSU faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members.



EQUITY

We commit to equity as a foundation of PSU's excellence. We define equity as ensuring everyone has access to opportunities necessary to satisfy essential needs, advance their well-being, and achieve their full potential. Our aim is to address the roots of inequities, including but not limited to racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, classism, and the intersections of these inequities. We commit to inclusion of historically marginalized communities and those underrepresented in higher education. We commit to ensuring that equity is integral to all elements of this plan—in its design, substance, implementation and the metrics used to measure progress. Equity considerations are included with each strategic goal to guide implementation.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Higher education is in a state of significant change. As Oregon's only urban research and teaching university, Portland State is well positioned to address the opportunities and challenges this presents. With this strategic plan, we intend to influence the evolution of higher education while educating more students with better outcomes while containing costs to students.

Regional position

With the decentralization of Oregon public university governance, competition among the universities will accelerate. Competition for students will increase with additional offerings in online education and degrees. Efforts by other universities to tap into the Portland-area market and establish satellite campuses or programs are likely to intensify. PSU can differentiate itself by continuing and expanding its successful collaboration efforts, and by refining and expanding its mission of access, equity, engagement and excellence.

Global competitiveness

PSU graduates will compete in a global economy in which more living wage jobs in Portland will require higher levels of education. PSU must deliver an education that teaches students how to think critically, stay connected in their communities, adapt nimbly to change and become adept at working with others in teams. Lifelong learning must remain a core value of our students and our programs.

Innovative pedagogy

reTHINK PSU is attracting national attention for the creative ways we develop and implement self-sustaining academic programs that meet the needs of today's student while containing costs. As an exemplar of innovative new learning strategies, PSU has an opportunity to share its work in this area, and by doing so influence the national conversation on higher education reform.

Education that leads to employment

College education costs have climbed dramatically. Without a significant increase in state aid, more students will take on extraordinary levels of debt, making it all the more imperative that PSU degrees are valued by employers. Higher education remains the best path to a better quality of life, and PSU in particular plays a significant role in overcoming income inequality.

Our location

PSU is at the center of Oregon's most dynamic and diverse city, which allows us to empower students to become engaged in urban life and provide them with the opportunity to make a difference. Portland distinguishes us from our Oregon peers and facilitates PSU's commitment to being an urban-serving university dedicated to translating theory into practice.

Changing demographics

Portland is becoming more diverse. If Portland State is to continue to serve our community, we must plan for the recruitment, retention, education and graduation of students from different racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and identity backgrounds.

Vision

Portland State University leads the way to an equitable and sustainable future through academic excellence, urban engagement, and expanding opportunity for all.

Mission

- We serve and sustain a vibrant urban region through our creativity, collective knowledge and expertise.
- We are dedicated to collaborative learning, innovative research, sustainability, and community engagement.
- We educate a diverse community of lifelong learners.
- Our research and teaching have global impact.

Values

- We promote access, inclusion, and equity as pillars of excellence.
- We commit to curiosity, collaboration, stewardship, and sustainability.
- We strive for excellence and innovation that solves problems.
- We believe everyone should be treated with integrity and respect.

Reputation

Portland State University pursues excellence through: Accessibility, innovation, collaboration, engagement, sustainability, transformation

Position

- An anchor institution, providing the Portland region with a highly educated population, substantial economic impact, and distinctive contributions to its culture.
- Contributing unique scholarship and research that support quality of life through problem solving.
- Delivering on our access mission, contributing to a highly educated and diverse community.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1

Elevate student success

To maintain and enhance our position as Oregon’s top urban research and teaching university, and as the state’s most diverse campus, we face challenges and demands that require new solutions. We must be strategic in how we use our limited resources to support students from all backgrounds to succeed.

Improving student success, including raising retention and graduation rates, is our top priority. To meet the state’s goal of 40 percent of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher, we must develop and improve pathways to ensure more PSU students earn degrees. We are particularly focused on ensuring all students—graduate and undergraduate—receive a rigorous and enriching academic experience that equips them for success in life and career. We seek to contain education costs. We endeavor to prepare students for a diverse and globally connected world.

PSU has unique metrics to consider: two-thirds of our students transfer here from other institutions; the average age of our undergraduates is 26; a large number are first-generation students; and we serve a high percentage of students from within the region and the state. Although the number of high school graduates is expected to flatten in coming years, an increasing percentage is likely to represent diverse racial, ethnic and linguistic students.

Objective

Provide a quality education and prepare students for careers and life in a global context.

Initiative 1:

Put students first

- 1.1 Explore and put in place new strategies to contain the cost of completing a PSU degree.
- 1.2 Identify and remediate administrative policies and procedures that impede student success by improving support services, programs and access to courses they need to progress towards graduation.
- 1.3 Undertake efforts to improve academic success by increasing the inclusion of, respect for and affirmation of all communities of students.
- 1.4 Explore and commit to measures that improve overall student wellness, safety, food and housing security and other concerns that can become barriers to student success.

Initiative 2:

Clarify academic pathways

- 2.1 Clarify and simplify university requirements.
- 2.2 Help students navigate their coursework and move effectively and efficiently toward graduation.
- 2.3 Create programs and services in conjunction with community colleges and other institutions to ensure clear pathways for transfer students.

Initiative 3: Use best practices to advance student retention

- 3.1 Increase advising capacity, revitalize advising systems and improve the visibility of student support services.
- 3.2 Expand culturally responsive and culturally specific supports for students from diverse communities.
- 3.3 Maximize use of advanced analytics to improve student outcomes.



EQUITY LENS

- Recognize that disparities in the retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students necessitate an investment in culturally responsive advising.
- Support faculty to understand equity issues to foster better relationships with historically marginalized and underrepresented students.
- Develop academic experiences, including community-based learning, that use universal design, accessibility and appropriate accommodations to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning experience for all students.

Initiative 4: Design and offer academic programs that lead to future success

- 4.1 Develop an academic plan with programs that prepare students for competitive advantage in life and career.
- 4.2 Provide flexible degrees to accommodate the diverse needs of students.
- 4.3 Assess opportunities for innovative academic programs that align with career paths, locally and globally.
- 4.4 Increase opportunities for students to participate in scholarly activities, research efforts and creative endeavors.

Initiative 5: Prepare for academic & career success

- 5.1 Establish orientation programs that address linguistic and cultural needs.
- 5.2 Increase technology training to support student learning.
- 5.3 Increase access to, and education about, scholarship opportunities, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged students.
- 5.4 Offer additional training for financial literacy.
- 5.5 Improve preparation for career placement and advancement.

Initiative 6: Enhance graduate student success

- 6.1 Grow and improve scholarships to support graduate study.
- 6.2 Create stronger linkages between research centers and institutes that hire graduate students with graduate students seeking financial support.
- 6.3 Strengthen career and professional development services to support post-graduate careers.

Initiative 7: Broaden international opportunities

- 7.1 Expand opportunities for international and cross-cultural learning experiences, including study abroad, campus exchanges, internships, community-based learning and co-curricular programs.
- 7.2 Increase international and cross-cultural perspectives on campus and in the classroom.
- 7.3 Expand financial support to increase the number and demographic diversity of study abroad participants.
- 7.4 Create opportunities for international and intercultural engagement in existing campus housing, cultural and recreation programs.
- 7.5 Develop innovative language immersion in academic and extracurricular activities.

STRATEGIC GOALS

2

Advance excellence in teaching & research

Attracting and retaining the highest quality faculty and entrusting them with academic freedom is the best means of achieving PSU's mission as a top urban research and teaching university. A renewed emphasis on professional development, strong integration in academic advising and robust shared governance will substantially strengthen the impact and achievement of the faculty and PSU.

Historically a teaching university, our level of sponsored research has increased by more than 50 percent since 2006. Our faculty excels at providing research that enhances and solves problems for the rapidly evolving Portland region. That research has been extended into national and global fields, bringing new and broader attention to PSU.

Our 22:1 faculty-to-student ratio puts us slightly below the national average for U.S. public universities. Fourteen percent of our faculty represent diverse racial and ethnic groups, which is close to the state average but below the Portland metro area and below the PSU student body.

Objective

Support a diverse faculty to advance teaching and research, honor academic freedom and prioritize investments to ensure relevant and high-quality academic programs. Enhance teaching environments, including curriculum, to ensure inclusion and affirmation for all students.

Initiative 1: Recognize and develop excellence in teaching

- 1.1 Create opportunities for continuous employment and shared governance for non-tenure eligible, teaching-intensive faculty.
- 1.2 Establish a new adjunct appointment category that recognizes sustained teaching excellence and offers competitive compensation.
- 1.3 Make professional development for all faculty a personal and institutional priority.
- 1.4 Examine, diversify and strengthen our teaching evaluations for all faculty to move beyond disproportionate reliance on student course evaluations.
- 1.5 Adopt high impact strategies for effective teaching and learning.
- 1.6 Develop more expansive mechanisms for evaluating students.

Initiative 2: Maintain an array of academic programs that reflects our academic priorities, including a focus on equity and social justice.

- 2.1 Assess the array of academic program offerings on a regular basis to ensure relevance, quality and equity.
- 2.2 Provide mechanisms to ensure that academic priorities, informed by faculty expertise and student needs, are appropriately reflected in planning for new programs and growth, and in decisions regarding program reduction and elimination.
- 2.3 Enhance the ability of faculty to deliver culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum, including universal design for learning.

Initiative 3: Recognize Outstanding Research

- 3.1 Establish a Distinguished Professor rank to recognize outstanding research, scholarship and creative work.
- 3.2 Create opportunities for faculty and graduate students to develop and enrich their research efforts.



Initiative 4: Prioritize for Impact

4.1 Determine and prioritize research investment and academic program development in areas where PSU is known for excellence, that show the greatest potential for collaboration and in which we have a competitive advantage.

4.2 Promote and incentivize faculty research, including support for disciplines with limited opportunities for external funding.

EQUITY LENS

- Strengthen this goal by committing internal resources to support academic, research and creative activities that diversify our scholarly portfolio and the knowledge we generate on campus.
- Consider differentiating PSU in the marketplace by re-branding our scholarly outputs to reflect specific values related to equity, collaboration, and reciprocity—that are community-based and partnership focused.

STRATEGIC GOALS

3

Extend our leadership in community engagement

Portland State has developed a reputation as a national model for urban universities that enhance their region by working with partners to solve problems. As the Portland metropolitan region grows and evolves, we can seize the opportunity to be a key partner in that evolution.

After more than 40 years of sustained growth, PSU has become a recognized anchor institution for the metropolitan region. Our economic impact is estimated to be \$1.44 billion per year. We are internationally known as an engaged university that combines rigor in the classroom with field-based experience, such as internships and classroom projects with community partners. Our students typically provide nearly 1 million service hours to businesses, nonprofits and government organizations each year.

We have been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation, the Peace Corps and the Corporation for National & Community Service for our civic engagement work. Our partnerships have helped make us an emerging leader in such fields as community health and health science, business administration, social work, sustainability and urban design. We will build on our reputation for urban engagement and make PSU a hub for the next evolution of scholarship and practice that is committed to solution-oriented partnerships.



Objective

Enhance engagement opportunities to further strengthen the reciprocal relationship between PSU and the broader community.

Initiative 1: Support lifelong community engagement

- 1.1 Sustain the community engagement experience throughout the lives and careers of alumni by connecting students and campus initiatives to alumni who wish to remain engaged.
- 1.2 Commit PSU to ongoing dissemination of knowledge about collaborative practice, community-building and social justice to empower the lifelong engagement of PSU graduates in their communities.
- 1.3 Expand engagement with regional school districts to ensure more students are prepared for college.

Initiative 2: Make PSU's engagement more visible and accessible

- 2.1 Organize, communicate and disseminate information on collaborative opportunities, projects and outcomes.
- 2.2 Facilitate opportunities for partners who wish to join us for community-based learning, applied and collaborative research, internship placement and initiatives that build community.
- 2.3 Create a research academy to analyze the practice and impact of engagement and inform the world about effective community collaboration through research, data collection and academic writing.

Initiative 3: Enhance internship opportunities

- 3.1 Encourage academic programs to establish internship programs where relevant to their curricular mission.
- 3.2 Expand community-based learning opportunities prior to the senior capstone.
- 3.3 Offer flexible internship opportunities for students who face challenges in balancing family, work and learning responsibilities, or for students who require accommodations.

Initiative 4: Elevate PSU's role as a regional anchor institution by advancing our strategic partnership agenda.

- 4.1 Strengthen and deepen university-wide, strategic partnerships with key business, government and civic organizations to deliver on regional goals related to economic and workforce development, innovation and entrepreneurship, urban sustainability and community health.
- 4.2 Align PSU's workforce and career pathway strategy with regional economic plans.
- 4.3 Work in concert with Oregon Health & Science University and other partners to create innovative health and life sciences programs.
- 4.4 Build university wide infrastructure and capability to coordinate and communicate key components of PSU industry/economic/workforce development agenda—i.e. internships, career pathways, entrepreneurship, and industry cluster support.
- 4.5 Develop a strategy for leveraging our purchasing, employment, and investment priorities to advance equity, sustainability and community wealth-building.

EQUITY LENS

- Acknowledge that authentic community engagement is reciprocal.
- Commit to collaboration that is mutually beneficial and brings real value to (and does not harm or diminish) PSU's community partners.
- Help PSU and its partners build greater capacity for advancing community wellbeing by designing partnerships that maximize social justice and racial equity.
- Develop partnerships that take into consideration the full costs of internships, service-learning, and experiential learning pedagogies.
- Accommodate students with limited financial resources who may struggle to balance family and work with the time commitments required by community based learning.

STRATEGIC GOALS

4

Expand our commitment to equity

Portland State is an access institution with a history of diversity and an emerging focus on addressing racism, equity and inclusion. With the Portland region in the midst of a demographic shift, diversity is one of the characteristics that set PSU apart in a crowded higher education market. We must ensure a campus climate that welcomes all students, employees, and community partners.

In academic year 2015, 40 percent of Portland State's incoming freshmen were students of color—a record for the university and nearly double the statewide percentage. This fact represents a trend we must address in all areas, including recruitment, hiring and retention of faculty, staff and administrators. We will demonstrate our commitment to expanding opportunity by applying an equity lens to campus-wide policy-making, planning and assessment processes. University employees, including faculty and academic advisors, will receive training for culturally responsive education so they are adequately prepared to provide inclusive services. We will regularly assess diversity outcomes and make necessary adjustments to ensure our students are equipped for success in a diverse and rapidly changing world. We will adopt strategies to further diversify our faculty, staff and administration.

Objective

Create an environment at PSU that is open, inclusive and committed to diversity, and ensure that all students and faculty embrace culturally responsive teaching and learning.

Initiative 1: Create a more inclusive campus

- 1.1 Create expectations, training and incentives for faculty, staff, and students to regularly participate in culturally responsive education and sharing opportunities.
- 1.2 Conduct a campus climate audit to assess and inform safety and inclusion.
- 1.3 Develop and utilize an equity lens in campus decision-making.
- 1.4 Provide linguistically appropriate student services.

Initiative 2:

Promote diversity through hiring and retention

- 2.1 Adopt best practices for recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse faculty, staff and administrators to better reflect the diversity of the student body.

Initiative 3:

Define and measure diversity learning outcomes

- 3.1 Incorporate assessment of diversity learning outcomes in academic units and the Diversity Action Plan.
- 3.2 Train faculty to incorporate diversity elements in their courses.



EQUITY LENS

- Deepen our commitment by looking for opportunities to make PSU policy, programs and practice more equitable.
- Elevate the campuses expectations for greater accountability around equity issues.
- Consider acknowledging equity efforts in promotion and tenure guidelines, performance evaluations and similar assessments.
- Acknowledge that “the international educational experience” can be local, by making valuable cross-cultural experiences available to our students through increased contact with international students and communities in our area.
- Recognize that cultural understanding is a pre-requisite for an engaged education and that we have a responsibility to provide our students with the necessary competencies to be able to work with diverse colleagues and the organizations they serve.

STRATEGIC GOALS

5

Innovate for long-term stability

The establishment and appointment of our own Board of Trustees has given us a new level of financial independence and accountability, as well as an unprecedented opportunity to set our own course. An improved economy and intense lobbying effort in 2015 led to a state funding package that reinvests in the state's universities. State spending on higher education remains well below pre-recession levels but continues to be a critical factor in our financial stability, and we will continue to seek improvements both at the state level and on our own. We are expanding our efforts to increase philanthropic giving and developing an initiative for additional local revenue.

We also are looking at creative and cost effective ways to offer courses and degrees. Our reTHINK PSU initiative has spawned dozens of projects that help students stay on course and graduate sooner using innovative curriculum, community engagement and effective technology. We are offering more degrees entirely online. To stay ahead of rapid changes in higher education, however, we must continuously innovate and not be satisfied with the status quo.

We will focus on innovative operating policies, encourage staff development, look for new and better ways to generate revenue, and devise strategies that emphasize student success, simplify internal operations, increase financial stability and keep our PSU community connected.



Objective

Foster innovation and continuous improvement in all areas of the University, including identification of new sources of revenue to advance the PSU mission.

Initiative 1: Inspire more community support

1.1 Engage the broader metropolitan community, particularly PSU alumni and business partners, to support the University through local revenue generation, scholarships, capital investment, community partnerships and other means.

Initiative 2: Diversify revenue streams

- 2.1 Pursue strategic growth of our revenue streams (enrollment, state funding, philanthropy, research, and auxiliary enterprises) to support our institutional mission.
- 2.2 Ensure sufficient reserves to manage through the cyclical budgetary nature of higher education funding and to make longer term strategic investments.
- 2.3 Follow principles of improving quality, performance, efficiency and outcomes, and supporting our core operations.

Initiative 3: Improve university systems and support

- 3.1 Eliminate or modernize practices or systems that are duplicative, inefficient or add unnecessary costs, taking into account costs generated by units and paying particular attention to costs incurred by students.
- 3.2 Improve campus infrastructure and systems.
- 3.3 Provide professional development opportunities and support for staff.

Initiative 4: Advance campus communication

4.1 Determine and implement the most effective ways to improve communication systems and culture to keep our community informed.

Initiative 5: Catalyze new ideas

- 5.1 Create conditions for the generation of new ideas that can advance our mission.
- 5.2 Provide more opportunities for the entire PSU community to come together to communicate and innovate.

Initiative 6: Plan for resiliency

- 6.1 Create and implement a comprehensive emergency plan that prepares PSU for natural disasters and other extraordinary occurrences that require additional safety measures and may result in loss of services to the campus community.
- 6.2 Provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure rapid response, ensure safety of the PSU community and restore critical services.

EQUITY LENS

- See that PSU stakeholders benefit as equally as possible from its investments and resource allocations.
- Strive to provide a campus environment that is welcoming and accessible.
- Control costs, expand and protect resources so PSU can continue to provide access to higher education and to an attainable degree for all the residents of this region who seek them.
- Leverage University operations and purchases to increase the amount of business we do with underrepresented contractors and suppliers.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The 2014-15 strategic planning process was designed to be inclusive, transparent and accessible to the entire PSU community.

Governance

The Strategic Plan Development Team served as the main driver of the plan. This diverse team represented a cross-section of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Board of Trustees, Foundation board members and members of the PSU Alumni Association board. A project manager and an outside consultant, Coraggio Group, facilitated. Decisions were based on general consensus. Separate “topic teams” provided deeper consideration of strategic themes. These teams made recommendations for the strategic goals and initiatives that form the core elements of the plan.

Research

Topic teams worked with relevant university committees and units that were familiar with the best practices and research in the field. The teams also conducted their own research.

Outreach

Development of the plan offered an opportunity to foster a new level of engagement and synergy throughout the PSU community. A communications team helped ensure substantial participation in the plan. Outreach and feedback channels included town hall meetings, social events, online surveys, a biweekly electronic newsletter, an interactive website and dozens of meetings with smaller interest groups. Input from the greater Portland community—corporate, civic and nonprofit—was received through surveys and conversations with campus committees.

NEXT STEPS

This plan is just the beginning. Much work remains as we pursue the innovations, ideas and actions intended to meet our five strategic goals. Implementation will be carried out through collaboration among the president, the president's executive staff, the Faculty Senate, the Board of Trustees and University groups, schools and other units. Input from relevant community stakeholders will help inform implementation of plan initiatives. The board will monitor progress and oversee an annual assessment of the plan through a robust set of key performance indicators, which will be defined and refined as part of the implementation process and which will address quality and excellence. The Strategic Plan Development Team will meet at regular intervals to assess and advise.

Key principles will guide us as we carry out this plan. We will employ expertise and research to ensure that our work is backed by evidence. We will adhere to core values of equity, excellence, innovation, academic freedom and community engagement. And we understand that we must work within the parameters of limited resources.

Finally, we will continue to engage and inform the PSU community on a regular basis as we move forward, including events, forums, electronic newsletters and the strategic planning website.

[pdx.edu/
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Thank
you!



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