

July 12, 2021

Ms. Teri Cannon  
Minerva Institute  
1145 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear President Cannon,

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Minerva Institute by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 25, 2021. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 to Minerva April 13-16, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Minerva prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 and the institution's May 23, 2021, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Bob Kerry, Board Chair, Vicki Chandler, Provost, Nikolaus Pelka, CFO, Ari Betof, chief advancement officer, and Kate McAllister, associate ALO. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

### **Actions**

1. Receive the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team report
2. Grant Initial Accreditation for a period of six years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2026 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2027
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2024, to address:
  - a. the status of library resources to meet student needs.
  - b. the basis for determining that the natural sciences curriculum can be effectively delivered without physical laboratory courses.
  - c. transparency to students regarding the full costs of attendance.
  - d. financial stability including the value of stock contributions from Minerva Project as well as the achievement of fundraising and enrollment goals.

The Commission commends Minerva in particular for the following:

1. Developing and successfully executing a new model of liberal arts education based on scientific evidence on effective pedagogies.
2. Assembling a talented group of people who are well suited and deeply committed to the institution's mission and well-placed in the organization to maximize their contributions.
3. Establishing an institutional culture that is informed by data and evidence and that encourages learning, innovation, and collaboration.
4. Demonstrating a strong student-centered emphasis on teaching excellence.
5. Implementing the sophisticated Forum technology platform designed to support active learning, outcomes-based curriculum, and assessment.

6. Leveraging the global diversity of its students, faculty, and locales to enrich the educational experience.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

1. Continue to monitor the appropriate balance between breadth and depth of the curriculum. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a)
2. Focus on the proper balance between rapid innovation and consistent quality in the academic programs. (CFRs 2.1, 2.10)
3. Ensure continued access to sufficient library resources after the end of the affiliation with Keck Graduate Institute. (CFR 3.5)
4. Assess the educational impact of the absence of physical laboratory courses, particularly in the sciences. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2a, 2.5, 3.5)
5. Ensure greater transparency about all-in costs to students net of financial aid (as well as impact of work on ability to participate in internships). (CFRs 1.6, 2.12) The Commission appreciated learning about the changes that have been made to make financial information more accessible and useful.
6. Exercise care in balancing low cost and efficiency with staffing levels sufficient to provide adequate support to students. (CFR 2.13)
7. Continue carefully managing finances during early years of independent status. (CFR 3.4)

In taking this action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirmed that Minerva Institute addressed the three Core Commitments and successfully completed the institutional review process for Initial Accreditation conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, Minerva should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

Minerva Institute must use the following statement if it wishes to describe its accreditation status publicly:

*Minerva Institute is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 1001 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 402, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001.*

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog.

The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by WSCUC refers to the quality of the institution as a whole. Because institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program at the institution, statements such as “this program is accredited” or “this degree is accredited” are incorrect and misleading. The phrase “fully accredited” is also to be avoided since no partial accreditation is possible.

The Commission stipulated that this action encompassed the degrees offered by Minerva at the time of this action, as listed at the end of this letter as the Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process. Degree programs reviewed and included under this action may be extended to other currently approved campuses of the institution without prior Substantive Change action. Offerings at new locations may need to go through Substantive Change approval, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Substantive Change manual.

Institutions granted Initial Accreditation are required to:

1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission.
2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.
3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of Minerva's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the Minerva Institute's website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Minerva undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley  
President

JSS/bgd

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Teri Cannon, ALO  
Bob Kerry, Board Chair  
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team  
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President

Attachment: Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees

Minerva Institute

Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degree  
Programs

Bachelor of Science in  
Computational Sciences Bachelor  
of Science in Natural Sciences  
Bachelor of Science in Social  
Sciences Bachelor of Science in  
Business  
Bachelor of Arts in Arts and  
Humanities Master of Science in  
Decision Analysis (MDA)