Minerva – An Overview

Minerva provides a reinvented university experience for the brightest, most motivated students in the world. Minerva draws on the best traditions of a research-based university while leveraging the latest available technology and harvesting decades of research on student learning and success. Combining a redefined student body, a reinvented curriculum, rigorous academic standards, cutting-edge technology, and an immersive global experience, Minerva is committed to providing an exceptional and accessible liberal arts and sciences education for future leaders and innovators across all disciplines.

Minerva Schools at KGI

In July 2013, Minerva Project partnered with Keck Graduate Institute (KGI), a member of the Claremont University Consortium, to incubate the Minerva Schools at KGI. The Minerva Schools at KGI are comprised of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business. The School of Arts and Sciences includes the College of Social Sciences, the College of Natural Sciences, the College of Computational Sciences, and the College of Arts and Humanities. The five colleges and core majors are accredited by the Western Association of School and Colleges (WASC).

The Minerva Schools matriculated its founding class in September 2014 and matriculated its Inaugural Class in Fall 2015. Combining a purposefully scaffolded interdisciplinary curriculum and rigorous academic standards, an accomplished faculty versed in the science of learning, an advanced interactive learning platform, and four years of immersive global experience, the Minerva Schools provides an undergraduate education designed specifically for structured intellectual development and deep learning across disciplines.

Founding Dean Dr. Stephen Kosslyn leads the School of Arts and Sciences while each individual college has its own distinguished dean recognized for academic leadership. Dr. Eric Bonabeau is the Dean of the College of Computational Sciences and is one of the world’s leading experts in complex systems and distributed adaptive problem solving. Dr. Daniel J. Levitin is the Dean of the College of Social Sciences and is a respected neuroscientist, musician, author, and record producer. Dr. Judith C. Brown is the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and is an accomplished scholar, educator, and administrator as well as a pioneer in the fields of gender history and the history of sexuality. Dr. Vicki Chandler is the Director of the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, and brings her expertise in plant sciences, biology, biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology. The deans are responsible for recruiting and training the faculty of their college, on-going development of one of the cornerstone courses, and developing the curricular offerings for the college.

Admission

Minerva has a strict no-quota, non-discrimination policy and welcomes applications from prospective students from around the world. Admission is merit based – no preference is given to status, athletics or geographical diversity. Minerva has stringent admission criteria, screening not only for strong intellectual and leadership background but also for analytical capabilities, creativity, drive, and grit. Minerva guarantees admission to any applicant who meets or exceeds our qualification criteria.
Academics & Faculty
The Minerva curriculum is based on studies of human motivation, learning, and memory and is truly unique to Minerva. At the core of Minerva's educational philosophy is a focus on learning outcomes, based on the latest teaching methodologies. Dr. Kosslyn and the deans have designed the Minerva curriculum to integrate proven learning approaches, with a focus on student success. The Minerva model is highly interdisciplinary and designed with the student as its focus. Students in every major will take courses across subject matter, from expert faculty in a variety of disciplines.

Minerva’s classes are live, discussion-intensive seminars directed in real-time by faculty using a proprietary interactive platform designed to maximize student interactions with the professor and with each other. There are no lectures and all classes are limited to 19 students. Seminar-style learning in small classes allows for personalized attention and vigorous discussion designed to provoke thought and challenge assumptions. Minerva’s proprietary software, the Active Learning Forum, allows us to assess every student interaction (including in-class participation and group projects) to provide students and faculty immediate feedback on student learning and performance. Because the learning experience can be greatly enhanced by leveraging this feedback, all classes take advantage of the interactive learning platform.

All incoming students take four cornerstone courses, the foundation on which the curriculum is built. The students begin to develop four core competencies through the curriculum: thinking critically, thinking creatively, communicating effectively and interacting effectively. This common intellectual platform is the base from which students develop their worldview throughout their lives. The four cornerstones are:

- **Formal analyses**: including a rigorous immersion in logic, rational thought, data analysis, and formal systems.
- **Empirical analyses**: focusing on the ability to use the scientific method to frame problems, test hypotheses, and engage in informed conjecture.
- **Complex systems**: helping the students to understand second order effects, multifactor interactions, trends, and complexity theory.
- **Multimodal communications**: including reading and writing effectively at a high level, public speaking, group project collaboration, visual communication, and formal debate.

The foundational skills students establish in their first year will be drawn upon in coursework throughout the following three years of study. Students will select a major and concentration during their second year and culminate their experience with the Minerva Capstone Project, which will help launch students into the next stage of their professional lives.

Student Life
Complementing classroom learning, Minerva students live and study in Minerva-designated housing in up to seven different cities during their four years of studies. Students spend their first year in San Francisco. Every semester thereafter they are encouraged to travel and live in Minerva residence halls located in cosmopolitan cities such as Berlin, Buenos Aires, Bangalore, Seoul, Istanbul, and London.
Students change locations every semester to maximize immersion in different cultures and languages, take advantage of location-specific co-curricular activities, and to develop a global network of connections prior to graduation. Every Minerva location also offers a distinctive range of social and extracurricular pursuits that influence student perspectives, fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity.

**Minerva Institute for Research and Scholarship**

The Minerva Institute for Research and Scholarship, led by Executive Chairman Bob Kerrey, is a non-profit that attracts and directs financial support towards academic programs for Minerva students and cutting-edge research for Minerva faculty. The Minerva Institute is committed to providing exceptional education experiences to deserving students while also enabling the advancement of faculty research. From scholarships to student loans, Minerva works with each admitted student to ensure he or she is able to attend.

**The Minerva Academy & Prize**

The Minerva Institute houses the Minerva Academy, an elite society of educators. Nobel Laureate Dr. Roger Kornberg serves as Governor of the Academy, an honorary institution and forum for open exchange of new ideas and enhanced practices in higher education instruction. The Academy awards the Minerva Prize, designed to recognized extraordinary advancements in teaching innovation, excellence and impact. The first Minerva Prize was awarded to Dr. Eric Mazur of Harvard University in May 2014.

In addition to Dr. Roger Kornberg, the Minerva Academy members include: Dr. Lloyd Armstrong; Dr. Ken Bain; Dr. Derek Bok; Dr. Cathy Davidson; Dr. Al Filreis; Dr. Diane Halpern; Dr. Stephen Kosslyn; Dr. Daniel Levitin; Dr. Eric Mazur; Dr. Roger Schank; Dr. Sheri Sheppard; Dr. Lee Shulman; Dr. Jennifer Summit; and Dr. Daniel Willingham.

**Minerva Project**

Minerva was founded by CEO Ben Nelson in 2012 and received a $25 million seed investment from Benchmark Capital. An academic advisory board was formed early on to provide guidance and support as Minerva began to reinvent every aspect of an undergraduate education. Minerva received a Series B investment from educational, technology and innovation investors including TAL (NYSE: XRS), Benchmark Capital, ZhenFund, and Yongjin Group in 2014.

A team of experienced and proven professionals have joined Minerva’s executive team to bring a wealth of experience in academics, accreditation, product development, marketing, student services, recruiting, business development, operations, and business management.