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# MINERVA

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Minerva Project Names Dr. Stephen M. Kosslyn as Founding Dean** *Former Harvard Dean Will Lead the Academics and Curriculum of the University*

**San Francisco, Calif. – March 12, 2013** – Minerva Project, which is redefining a top-tier university experience to prepare global leaders and innovators, today announced that Dr. Stephen M. Kosslyn has been appointed the Founding Dean of the university. Kosslyn joins the Minerva Project from Stanford University, where he has been serving as Director of the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, the world's preeminent institution in the field. Prior to Stanford, Kosslyn was John Lindsley Professor of Psychology in Memory of William James, and Dean of Social Sciences at Harvard University, having previously been chair of the Department of Psychology at Harvard. As Dean of Social Sciences, he actively participated in efforts to revise and improve the curriculum, drawing on his extensive research in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience to improve teaching and enhance student learning.

“With Stephen’s breadth of experience at the most respected universities in the world, he will bring to Minerva the best traditions of bricks-and-mortar institutions while at the same time leveraging the latest research-based advancements in teaching and learning,” said Ben Nelson, founder and CEO of Minerva Project. “At Minerva, we have an opportunity to start with a blank canvas and to develop the most compelling curriculum from scratch. There is no one more qualified to lead the university’s academic efforts.”

After receiving his Ph.D. in Psychology from Stanford University, Kosslyn held appointments as Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins, and Associate Professor positions at Harvard and Brandeis. In 1983, Kosslyn was appointed a full professor at Harvard, becoming one of the youngest people ever to be granted a full professor position in his department. Kosslyn has been recognized by election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, by three honorary doctorates, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the National Academy of Sciences Initiatives in Research Award. He has published over 300 scientific papers. His forthcoming book (his 13<sup>th</sup>), *Top Brain/Bottom Brain* (with G. W. Miller), develops a new theory of "cognitive modes" - different thinking styles that affect how each of us approaches the world and interacts with other people.

“I am excited to be joining the Minerva team and am honored to be able to contribute to this revolutionary project,” said Stephen M. Kosslyn. “I’m looking forward to playing a role in seeing the science of learning fully applied to higher education, and I love the idea of using technology to bring a seminar-based 21<sup>st</sup> century university experience to the highest-potential students from around the world.”

Kosslyn will be hiring heads for Minerva’s four Colleges in the School of Arts & Science, and then will oversee appointing a distinguished faculty to develop and teach Minerva’s seminar-based classes. All

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classes will be taught at an advanced level and delivered in discussion-intensive formats using a live-streaming, proprietary platform that has been designed to maximize student interactions with the professor and with each other. All classes will be directed in real-time by faculty, and classes will be limited to a maximum of 25 students.

Minerva students will benefit from Kosslyn's academic leadership and guidance. The curriculum being created is based in part on studies of human motivation, learning, and memory. Every aspect of the academic experience is being reimagined, including a fresh approach to the first-year curriculum. To ensure that all students begin their Minerva experience by learning the foundational skills necessary to succeed in college and professional life after graduation, all students will take the same four cornerstone courses during their first year. Case studies will form a key component of these courses, and will serve to integrate the learned material with concepts in real-world contexts. The foundational skills students develop in their first year will be drawn upon in coursework throughout the following three years of study. Students will select a concentration during the middle of their sophomore year and culminate their Minerva experience with a senior capstone project.

Complementing classroom learning, Minerva students will be encouraged to live and study in Minerva-designated housing in up to seven different cities during their four years of studies. Minerva campuses located around the world will enhance the academic experience and provide students with a unique cultural, social and political experience.

"Steve Kosslyn is a scholar and teacher of great distinction," said Larry Summers, chairman of the Minerva Project Advisory Board and former Harvard University President and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. "He has demonstrated again and again that great thinkers can be great doers. I cannot imagine a better leader for Minerva's effort to develop new scalable approaches to higher education."

### **About Minerva Project**

Minerva Project is launching a top-tier university built to accelerate the life trajectories of the world's brightest and most motivated students. Opening in Fall 2015, Minerva will draw on the best traditions of a research-based university education while leveraging cutting-edge technologies and harvesting decades of research on student learning and success. Minerva is committed to providing an unparalleled educational experience for preparing global leaders for the 21st century. Minerva was founded by CEO Ben Nelson in 2010 and received a \$25 million seed investment from Benchmark Capital in 2012. Former Harvard University President Larry Summers chairs the Minerva Project Advisory Board. To learn more, visit <http://www.minervaproject.com>.

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