Admissions

Deciding to Enroll

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Introduction

t Minerva, we believe the decision to enroll should be clear: there is no other institution that better prepares students for success in the 21st century. However, we recognize the reality that the merits of the program are only one aspect of the decision-making process. Other factors include students' passions and interests, the type of university experience they are looking for, as well as more practical concerns, such as financing and aid.

Minerva is distinctive among top undergraduate programs in many respects. It can be helpful for students to discuss the decision to enroll with their family members and other trusted advisors. This document highlights many of the aspects that are very different from other universities, as well as those that are often a source of questions.

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Undergraduate Program

Developing Critical Skills for Future Success

Minerva's four-year, undergraduate program is deliberately designed to teach the fundamental skills needed for success in the twenty-first century. The integrated liberal arts and sciences curriculum is based on the science of learning and structured to emphasize both broad knowledge and deep mastery.

Demanding Academics

The intensive academic program requires every student to fully participate in every class. All classes are small—no more than 19 students—and discussion-based, with no lectures, *ever*. Students are regularly called upon to provide their perspectives, explain their thinking, and collaborate on project work.

This active learning approach is based on decades of research into how students learn best. Minerva's pedagogy is structured to stimulate deeper cognition, greater understanding, and the ability to transfer concepts learned in one domain to entirely different situations.

Furthermore, this distinctive model emphasizes project work instead of exams, thus challenging students to explore broadly, while gaining deep knowledge in their selected fields of study. The Minerva curriculum promotes the development of practical skills that will serve students for the rest of their lives and enable them to adapt as the world changes.

Whether earning a single undergraduate degree, a double major, or double concentration, students will be continuously challenged and inspired.

Year 1: Foundation

Instead of basic introductory material, the first-year at Minerva is devoted to the four Cornerstone courses. Collectively, these courses focus on developing the Habits of Mind and Foundational Concepts (HCs) that underlie four core competencies—thinking critically, thinking creatively, communicating effectively, and interacting effectively—which serve as the practical foundation for future success.

The Cornerstones are structured to teach students to apply all four core competencies across multiple disciplines. For example, in the Formal Analyses course, students learn inductive logic. This concept, part of the critical thinking competency, is first introduced in readings and class activities about cloning, then subsequently applied to topics in artificial intelligence, the study of global pandemics, and the nature of human happiness. In this way, a single concept is explored across various fields—biology, computer science, public health, and psychology. Furthermore, inductive logic may be invoked and graded in any other Cornerstone course, as well as any of the courses taken in future years.

The Cornerstone courses—32 units in all—provide the breadth and depth of knowledge that will be students' academic foundation for the three years that follow.

"The goal of Minerva's curriculum isn't memorization or the study of factual information; we study academic content so we can develop fluid and adaptable skills. Content is not an end in itself, but a medium through which we learn to develop our minds."

Guillaume Picard, UK Class of 2019

Undergraduate Program

Year 2: Direction

In the second year, students construct a personalized course of study. Working with their academic advisors, they explore and then select a major, which sets the direction for the next three years of study. The five majors are Arts & Humanities, Business, Computational Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Within each are multiple concentrations, each focused on a specific aspect of the broader domain.

In addition, every course at Minerva is seminal—unlike the electives found in other university curricula—which gives students the opportunity to explore other majors and concentrations.

This combination of breadth and depth provides a level of flexibility not possible within traditional majors.

Year 3: Focus

Students continue to refine their academic focus in year three, when they select a concentration within their majors. The concentrations enable more directed work in a chosen field and are more real-world challenges than the majors found at other universities; Minerva students learn practical knowledge that can be applied across each major field and to emergent categories within them.

For example, in Computational Sciences, the Data Science and Statistics concentration teaches students to analyze, design, and utilize the infrastructure and technologies required to work with massive amounts of data. These capabilities—extracting and exploiting insights hidden within "big data"—are broadly relevant to nearly every major organization in the world and are the basis for numerous growing industries.

Work on the final Capstone project—the culmination of the undergraduate degree—also begins in the Focus year.

Year 4: Synthesis

The final year at Minerva centers on completing a self-directed Capstone project, which will be evaluated according to the standards relevant to each field. By envisioning, planning, and producing an integrated application of their skills and interests, students are able to create something that is both personally compelling and makes a contribution to their fields. Whether they choose to write an original screenplay, the code for a disruptive technology, or the business plan for a bold social venture, the idea and implementation are theirs to lead. The key is that it be a distinctive concept with practical value to the world.

This effort is complemented by two Tutorial courses and a final elective. The Tutorials are collaborative, student-driven explorations of specific topics. In concert with 2–5 other classmates who share their interests, students work with their professors to select the subject matter and specific readings.

Manifest

The Capstone is completed and presented during Manifest, a month-long term that takes place in San Francisco, following the final semester of year four. During this celebratory conclusion to the Minerva experience, students present their Capstone works to an audience of faculty, fellow students, and members of the broader community. Successful Capstone projects will effectively propel students into the next stage of their professional lives.

Global Experience

Gaining Insight into the Complexity of the World

At Minerva, students live and learn in seven world cities—and seven distinct cultures. From San Francisco to Buenos Aires to Seoul, they are exposed to the diversity of each urban environment, providing a deeper understanding of the breadth and complexity of the people and cultures of the world.

Experiential Learning

Through intensive global immersion, students learn to embrace new perspectives and ideas. In each city, students have numerous opportunities to participate in challenging, location-specific programs that push them to apply concepts learned in class to real-world scenarios. Utilizing the rich resources in each city, students attend work sessions, collaborate with civic organizations, and engage with prominent cultural figures.

Throughout the term, these programs continue to escalate—from basic exposure to new people, places, and fields—through sustained project work intended to provide meaningful solutions for these civic partners.

For example, Minerva students in San Francisco may work with the Mayor's Office of Civic Innovation to devise new, inventive approaches for promoting greater resident engagement in neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, in Buenos Aires, student teams may work with Mercado Libre, Argentina's largest online retailer, to develop strategies and tools for countering the inevitable entry of powerful North American competitors, like Amazon and Ebay. Projects like these span sectors, from government agencies and not-for-profit organizations to corporations. These civic partnerships also often have a robust social impact component, enabling students to affect change in each city they live in.

Additionally, students are invited to attend a number of signature Minerva events, including Civitas, a recurrent gathering of Minerva students, faculty, and staff, together with civic, academic, and industry leaders.

This experiential learning programming, collaboratively developed by the student experience and academic teams, is designed to deepen understanding of academic material and reinforce practical skills, while cultivating vital character traits like empathy, resilience, and accountability.



Global Experience

Global Exposure, Local Living

Instead of investing in maintaining the expensive buildings, campus facilities, and frivolous amenities found at other top universities, Minerva uses the vast resources already available in major world cities. We lease residential buildings and focus our resources on developing relationships with the businesses, government entities, and cultural institutions in each location.

The residence halls are deliberately selected for their relationships to the urban environment, including proximity to vibrant neighborhoods, transportation options, parks and recreation areas, as well as convenient access to food, shopping, and other services. Students experience the best of each city every day: the flavor of local ingredients in home-cooked meals, the social scene at neighborhood restaurants, parks, and cafés, and the allure of world-renowned cultural institutions.

Through participation in recreational, cultural, and community-based activities, students experience each city as local citizens. Together with their classmates, students explore diverse cultures, discover new interests, and forge enduring relationships.

To ease the administrative requirements of traveling to all seven residential locations, Minerva assists students with tasks like making embassy appointments, gathering support documents, and completing visa applications.

Moreover, despite travel restrictions among some countries, Minerva is committed to ensuring every admitted student receives the same extraordinary educational experience and sense of belonging to the Minerva community, regardless of nationality, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or home country.

"Even in the first three months in San Francisco, I have gotten so much more out of where I am than if I were on a sheltered campus. It is not about the gyms or the sports teams or the brand new rec centers. It's about making connections with people, making connections with other students."

Ian Van Buskirk, USA Class of 2019

Safety, Health & Wellness

Fostering independence within a tight-knit community

Residential living at Minerva centers around the student body and the site-specific opportunities available in each city. With a team of dedicated Student Affairs and Student Experience professionals in each residential location, students have the support they need to experience each place to its fullest.

International Student Community

Minerva students themselves come from all parts of the globe, with more than 75% from outside the United States. There is no nationality, ethnicity, or cultural group in the majority. Living within this incredible diversity fosters an understanding that transcends borders, providing multicultural insight that will serve students long after graduation.

The student body shares values and a unified sense of purpose, which defines a collective identity. Together, students develop a common intellectual language, a mutual understanding of how to think about—and approach—the world. This becomes the basis for collaboration and communication within tight-knit student cohorts.

Living together, they establish weekly rituals, organize interest-based groups, and build enduring bonds of friendship. From cooking communal meals to organizing study groups, public performances, and overnight trips, each cohort becomes an extended family.

"I have a unique opportunity to live and study alongside a very diverse group of students and venture outside of my comfort zone. Since coming to Minerva, I have met people from so many different countries, races and backgrounds, and have learned immensely from their various perspectives."

Joy Okoro, Nigeria Class of 2019

Safety, Health & Wellness

Residential Living

The Student Affairs team is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and positive learning environment that enables all Minerva students to thrive, so they can make the most of their time at Minerva and devote as much energy to academics, experiential learning, and personal growth as possible.

One Residence Assistant (RA) is assigned to each group of 15 students, forming supportive microcommunities that cultivate an environment of open communication and strong support. Selected for their established leadership abilities and trained in first aid, basic counseling, and official policies and procedures, RAs help other students adjust to life at Minerva, while helping to organize events within the residence halls and throughout each city.

Every residence hall is also overseen by an experienced Residence Life Coordinator. These full-time staff members are positioned on-site to support students during their time in each location, offering help and oversight whenever needed.

Safety, Health, and Wellness

Minerva residence halls are located in safe neighborhoods and equipped with security measures appropriate for each site. Students also have access to "safety in the city" programming, offered through established relationships with local law enforcement and other relevant organizations.

In preparation for a variety of emergencies, Minerva has a comprehensive emergency management plan, a text-based alert system to notify all students and families automatically in the event of a major emergency, and a 24-hour emergency hotline, which is available to all students in every Minerva residential location.

Moreover, every residential location includes access to exceptional healthcare, mental health counseling, and general wellness services. Trained professionals are available to assist with any issues that may arise, offering both individual counseling and community programming for wellbeing, stress reduction, and cultural adjustment.

All of these student resources are easily accessed from city-specific websites that include personnel directories and information for the full range of local health and safety services—from hospitals and clinics to local police and fire departments.



Coaching & Talent Development

Preparing for a lifetime of career success

Minerva's focus on student success includes access to individualized professional development resources not available at other universities.

Coaching & Talent Development

Modeled on the most well-respected talent agencies in the world, Minerva's Coaching and Talent Development Team helps students lay the foundation for meaningful work in their fields of choice, then continues to provide guidance, support, and promotion as their careers progress.

Whether in academia, the public sector, or private enterprise, the Coaching and Talent Development Team works to connect students' passions and interests with opportunities in existing and emerging fields. The agency provides placement, advisory, networking, promotional, and publicity services during every career stage—from undergraduate internships to graduate programs to new ventures to leadership positions at established organizations.

Personalized Coaching and Training

Beginning in their first year of studies, students are assigned a professional coach to help them articulate their values, interests, and professional goals. Through this personalized guidance, students identify the roles suitable for their career goals, practice techniques for ascending from one position to the next, and learn how to avoid missteps along the way.

The agency also helps orient students to the regional job markets and distinct work cultures in each of the seven residential locations, building multicultural dexterity. Additionally, we provide a range of professional development resources on topics like optimizing job performance, working effectively in teams, seeking support within an organization, and other guidance to help students get the most out of every professional experience.

Networking, Placement, and Recruiting

The recruitment team actively identifies relevant opportunities for each student, providing an extensive global pipeline to a broad range of corporate, educational, nonprofit, and government organizations, including internship roles at Minerva. Once opportunities are identified, students have the support needed to pursue them, from initial introductions to help with the application and the interview process. Whether interning with tech giants like Apple and Amazon, working in a venture capital seed fund, or honing their skills at top research institutions, Minerva students gain valuable professional experience throughout their undergraduate years.

In addition, they gain access to a global network of academic, political, business, and social leaders, to help build relationships and grow their lists of professional contacts. These influential connections can help with business development efforts, fundraising, research and development, and personal access and influence at every stage of professional growth, helping students to propel their careers forward.

80%

of the jobs students will fill in the future do not exist today.

Source: 2014 Study by Siemens USA

Coaching & Talent Development

Ongoing Publicity and Promotion

Our team of publicists promotes students' accomplishments throughout their careers, by working to highlight individual achievements, through relevant media outlets, events, and other platforms. From editorial coverage and opinion pieces to research papers, case studies, and speaking engagements, this team helps students develop and manage their public personae, ultimately positioning them as innovative thinkers and leading experts in their chosen fields.

Upon graduation, Minerva students are ensured of this support throughout the rest of their professional lives. From one-on-one sessions with coaches to ongoing promotion of their personal accomplishments, graduates will have access to the people, tools, and services to help them amplify their success and realize their personal potential—supporting a lifetime of extraordinary achievement.

Professional Experience

Unlike most underclassmen at other universities, a large majority of Minerva students secured meaningful roles with top organizations. The positions were impressive, spanning functions, industries, and geographies.

90%

of managers said Minerva students performed well above average when compared to other interns

100%

of managers said they would hire Minerva interns again or recommend to others

Select Internship Partners:





























Investing in students' extraordinary potential

At Minerva, we recognize that intelligence, ambition, and the capacity to make meaningful change are found at every socioeconomic level, throughout the world.

Lowest Possible Tuition

We keep costs low by only investing in the things that directly improve the learning experience. Because we do not maintain major infrastructure, annual tuition is under a third that of other top universities, while housing and service fees are comparable with those at most every public and private institution in the U.S.

We charge only what is needed to provide students with an exceptional education, including hiring top faculty, maintaining small class sizes, developing the innovative curriculum and challenging courses, as well as continually advancing the capabilities of Forum. However, we do not offer tenure for faculty, which generally favors professors who no longer teach. As a result, we minimize the financial burden and increase access to top students from around the world.

Residential and Student Services Fees

We work hard to provide a safe and healthy environment, so students can learn effectively and experience each city to its fullest. In addition to the support staff and housing costs, the service fees fund an array of experiential learning opportunities specific to each location. These programs include curated experiences and access to many of the foremost educational, scientific, cultural, business, and government leaders and institutions in the world.

Manifest (Final Year Only)

Students should anticipate additional expenses in the fourth year to cover tuition, housing, expenses, and travel for the additional month in San Francisco required to present their final Capstone projects.

Health Insurance

All students are required to have health insurance as a condition of enrollment. Minerva offers competitively-priced insurance at cost. Some students choose to acquire comparable health insurance through other means, such as the coverage offered by their parents' employers.

Required Technology

Technical support and high-speed, wireless internet are included in the residential and student services fees. However, students are required to supply their own laptops and headsets that meet the requirements for use of Forum. Minerva offers student discounts on laptops, as well as most books and supplies, through the Claremont Consortium bookstore. The cost for required technology varies, ranging from approximately \$1000 to more than \$3000 USD, depending upon manufacturer and specific system setup.



Tuition & Financial Aid

Other Expenses

All other living expenses, from food and transportation to books and supplies are estimated based on typical costs and an average across all seven locations. Because these are only estimates, actual amounts will vary, depending upon individual students' lifestyle choices and the actual cost of living in each city.

Travel Costs

World travel is an important aspect of the full residential experience, but is not required. Like other universities, the cost of travel between residential locations, or to and from home, is the responsibility of each student.

Need-Based Financial Aid

Student eligibility for financial aid is determined entirely by demonstrated need. Applying for financial aid is independent of the admissions process, allowing us to evaluate all candidates equally. Aid packages typically comprise a low-interest loan—not exceeding \$20,000 USD across all four years—and work-study opportunities. This combination is intended to allow students to pay down loans during their four years of study, thereby reducing any lasting financial burden after graduation.

For the most financially disadvantaged students, the Minerva Institute provides need-based scholarships. Based on generous philanthropic gifts, every dollar in the scholarship fund is directed to educating our students.

At Minerva, investing in our students' futures is a shared responsibility. We provide significant financial support for eligible students, but expect students and their families to contribute to the cost of attending, to an extent that is both fair and sustainable. By sharing the responsibility of funding their educations, students have a powerful incentive to make the most of it.

ESTIMATED COSTS / 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

Tuition & Fees

Tuition	\$13,950
Residential Services Includes Housing, Broadband Internet, Residential Staff, Location-based Support	\$11,000
Student Services Includes Experiential Learning Programs, Orientation Programs, Mental Health	\$2,000
Subtotal	\$26,950
Subtotal Other Expenses ¹	\$26,950
	\$26,950 \$5,000

¹ These expenses are not paid to Minerva.

80%

of current students receive financial aid, regardless of nationality.

Common Questions

Answering Common Questions about Minerva

Why do top students choose to attend Minerva over other highly-selective institutions?

Minerva was established to address the world's highachieving students, who are underserved by traditional higher education institutions. The thoughtful, evidencebased curriculum; the intimacy of the seminars; the direct interaction with expert professors; the multicultural student body; the global residential experience; and the opportunity to learn practical skills are the foremost reasons students are inspired to become members of the growing student community.

Living and learning in up to seven of the most vibrant world cities, students gain insight into real-world challenges at a depth that is impossible to match when studying in a typical campus environment.

Moreover, the rigorous curriculum is structured to impart the core skills needed to succeed in today's rapidly-evolving world and to adapt as it continues to change. By attending only small seminar classes—not large lectures—students interact directly with professors and peers, enabling individualized instruction in a highly stimulating setting.

Minerva is not right for every student, but is an ideal fit for those who are bright, motivated, globally conscious, and independent. For such students, Minerva provides an intellectual and personal growth experience unparalleled in top-tier higher education.

Will Minerva students be accepted to premier graduate programs, or hired by top employers?

Minerva is designed to impart the skills that numerous studies have found to be most valued by graduate programs and employers alike. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and the focus on teaching critical thinking, creativity, effective communication, and effective interaction provides the ideal foundation for success after graduation because these skills are valued in nearly every field. Employers regularly recruit from top schools like those in the Ivy League, based on the name alone, because they falsely assume these institutions consistently produce highly capable graduates. With a 2% acceptance rate, Minerva's stringent admissions process is selecting an even higher caliber of student. In fact, many of our students turned down Ivy League schools to attend Minerva.

What about career services and job placement?

A dedicated Coaching and Talent Development Team provides lifelong advocacy and guidance from coaches, recruitment experts, and publicists.

Minerva also continues to develop a powerful network of employers and graduate programs, including companies such as McKinsey & Company, Goldman Sachs, Google, and Twitter, as well as top graduate schools such as KGI, UCSF and Harvard Medical School. Leaders in these organizations have already expressed interest in recruiting Minerva graduates because they possess the intellect and capabilities to thrive in such competitive environments.

Is Minerva a for-profit institution? Is that why there is no admissions limit?

Minerva is structured in three parts. The Minerva Schools at KGI—the entity students apply to and receive their degrees from — is an undergraduate program of the not-for-profit KGI (Keck Graduate Institute), a member of the prestigious Claremont Consortium. Minerva Project is a separate entity that provides various services to the Schools and retains the intellectual property associated with the program. The Minerva Institute, which is devoted to raising and providing funds for student scholarships, as well as student and faculty research, is also a non-profit (501 3c) entity.

The entire organization is committed to delivering an extraordinary student experience. Minerva only admits students who meet our stringent qualifications, but our flexible model allows for unlimited enrollment capacity. Minerva is committed to always providing the best possible educational experience and maintaining the lowest possible tuition costs.

Common Questions

What majors are offered?

Minerva offers majors and concentrations across all vital academic disciplines: the computational sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities, and business. For a full list and descriptions of courses, please view the course catalog at: https://minerva.kgi.edu/academics/course_catalog

Do Minerva professors teach full-time?

Yes. Minerva hires professors, typically from other top university programs, that are dedicated to teaching students. Many Minerva professors also conduct research, yet their focus remains on instruction and providing the best student outcomes possible.

Is Minerva a fully accredited institution?

Yes. The Minerva Schools at KGI are accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (www.wscuc.org). This is the same body responsible for accrediting other respected institutions like Stanford University, the University of Southern California (USC), the University of California system, which includes UCLA and UC Berkeley (Cal), and the Claremont Consortium, which includes Pomona and KGI (Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences). Minerva offers the newest academic programs at KGI, including its sole undergraduate degree program. Minerva is listed as a branch campus, based on its San Francisco headquarters, with the degree programs categorized under the "distance learning" modality because the global residential rotation fits no other existing categories.

How does the Minerva curriculum differ from those at Ivy League schools?

Most Ivy League schools do not have a deliberate curricular path that provides students with dynamic skills and discipline-specific mastery. At most top schools, students take an assortment of classes with the hope that critical and creative thinking skills will be gained in the process. At Minerva, all students take the same four Cornerstone courses during their first year to develop an intellectual foundation that will benefit them, no matter which field they eventually pursue. During the second year, students choose a major

and concentration, with half of their courses within the concentration and the other half in other disciplines, ensuring both breadth and depth. During the third and fourth years, students work on their Capstone, an independent research and development project that allows them to apply what they have learned to address a practical challenge. Beyond a traditional thesis project, the Capstone is developed as a true bridge to a graduate program or professional career. Students also participate in two Tutorial courses during their final year, which are designed by the students themselves, in collaboration with a faculty member, to explore a particular area of interest in greater depth.

If a student decides to leave, will Minerva credits transfer to another school?

Minerva is a fully-accredited undergraduate program, so our classes will transfer in the same way courses from any institution will transfer; specific course credits are subject to the discretion of the accepting university.

Since students live together, why are classes conducted on computers?

Forum allows students to learn in a way that is not possible in a traditional class setting. Founding Dean Stephen M. Kosslyn, Ph.D. spent much of his career studying the cognitive and behavioral science of learning. The advanced technology of Forum is based on this research.

For example, studies show that the best way to encourage rapid improvement is to provide regular, practical feedback. Whereas students at traditional universities receive only midterm and final grades, at Minerva participation in every class is recorded and analyzed, so professors can give immediate and specific guidance on how best to improve. By conducting classes in this format professors can also connect curriculum across courses, giving students the benefit of collaborative information sharing.

Common Questions

Are Minerva staff present in the residence halls?

Staff and other personnel are present in every Minerva residence hall. Each location has one Residence Life Coordinator to ensure student health and wellness, as well as multiple Resident Advisors (RAs).

What is the social experience outside of class?

Minerva students have an enjoyable, culturally rich, and intellectually stimulating experience outside of class. With classes conducted Monday through Thursday, Friday is reserved for experiential learning activities that encourage meaningful engagement with business, civic, and cultural organizations.

In San Francisco, for example, students are engaged in a project with the Office of Civic Innovation at the Mayor's office in City Hall.

In addition to these planned programs, students organize their own activities, as well as social and community events. By utilizing the city as an extended campus, students embrace the urban fabric, while building a tight-knit community among classmates.

Is the environment safe and conducive to learning?

Minerva will never compromise the safety and security of our students. In addition to Student Affairs staff and Resident Advisors (RAs), we also employ dedicated psychological support staff, as well as advanced systems for addressing issues before they escalate.

Will students be able to continue to practice their religions, or non-academic passions (sports, etc.)?

Because of the tremendous resources available in our residential locations, students are able to pursue their individual passions, whether artistic, athletic, religious, or in other domains.

To guard against skyrocketing tuition costs, Minerva does not own or manage extensive facilities; instead, our staff work together with students to utilize local amenities and facilitate experiences that students are passionate about. For example, students in San Francisco participate in yoga classes at local studios, develop hands-on science programs at the Exploratorium, play on local soccer teams, and practice a variety of religions in churches, temples, and mosques throughout the city.

How much financial aid is available? How is that decided? Is it in the form of loans or scholarships?

Minerva will work with each individual family, regardless of nationality or country of origin, to provide an equitable financial aid package, ensuring that every qualified student has the ability to attend. Financial aid packages comprise a combination of low-interest student loans, work-study opportunities, and, in select cases, scholarship grants. All financial aid is based entirely on need, rather than merit, as determined by the independent financial aid application process. If you have any questions specifically about financial aid, please email: financialaid@minerva.kgi.edu.



Ben NelsonFounder and CEO



Therese Cannon
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