March 4, 2014

Dr. Sheldon M. Schuster
President
Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences
535 Watson Drive
Claremont, CA 91711

Dear President Schuster:

During its February 20, 2014 meeting, the Structural Change Committee of the WASC Senior College and University Commission considered the proposal submitted by Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences (KGI) to change its mission and offer an online Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences. This application represents the first baccalaureate level degree program for KGI and thus a new degree level.

Consideration of this structural change follows submission by the institution of a full program proposal, a review by a panel of members of the Substantive Change Committee, a site visit by members of the review panel on December 9, 2013, and submission of a site visit report. The Committee had access to the original structural change application materials, the letter from WASC staff communicating the findings of the Substantive Change Committee panel action of November 25, 2013, and the site visit report.

The Structural Change Committee endorsed the findings of the Substantive Change Committee and the site visit report. The Structural Change Committee developed two additional areas of emphasis for further attention.

The Structural Change panel referred to the full Commission its recommendation that the change in mission and the online Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences program be approved. This recommendation was ratified by the Commission as further described below:

1. Approved the change in mission and the offering of the online Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences to be implemented in fall 2014 with a deadline for implementation under this approval of fall 2015.

2. Required that KGI address the Substantive Change Committee recommendations from the December 27, 2013 site visit report including:
a. Student-Related Issues: plan and implement a scaling up of student services in response to rapid enrollment growth, especially in its international settings; continue development of student travel logistics and their inclusion in orientation efforts; use the Minerva platform to track student travel logistics and other information;

b. Faculty: track faculty turnover and be prepared to implement appropriate changes in hiring or contracts to ensure sufficient continuity for students; consider funding faculty participation in conferences related to the scholarship of teaching and learning;

c. Technology: continue to work to resolve technical issues to include full student costs and training for faculty on multicultural issues related to technology use; review the design of residential housing to provide technology labs or designated technology enhancements in communal spaces and meeting rooms; consider developing arrangements with libraries in each international location to support student learning, within the same time zone;

d. Assessment: continue development of rubrics to assess student learning and faculty effectiveness; consider researching the impact of video archiving on student learning and faculty effectiveness;

e. Strategic Planning: include KGI’s plans for undergraduate programs and its relationship to the Minerva project.

3. Required that KGI address the Structural Change Committee recommendations including:

a. Review and revise, as appropriate, recruitment strategies and admissions policies to ensure an appropriate response to the increasing economic and cultural diversity in society, nationally and internationally;

b. Clarify how faculty, full- and part-time, exercise effective academic leadership, and define the governance roles, rights, and responsibilities of all members of the faculty.

4. Required a follow-up site visit in fall 2016 to monitor progress on the recommendations in this letter, as well as recommendations from the Substantive Change Committee reviews of all subsequent new Minerva degree programs. A report related to these recommendations will be due to WASC eight weeks prior to the visit.

5. Required that progress toward these recommendations be a subject of the fall 2017 Offsite Review and the institutional report due three months in advance of the visit.
Please note that approval of this program does not confer General baccalaureate degree-granting authority to KGI, and all new baccalaureate degree programs will need to be reviewed through the substantive change process. This letter and the substantive change visit report will be posted on the WASC website in accordance with WASC Commission policy. If KGI would like to respond to the Commission’s findings, a link to your response will be posted on the WASC website.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President & Executive Director

cc: Teri Cannon, ALO
    Members of the Substantive Change Committee
    Members of the Structural Change Committee
    Maureen A. Maloney, WASC Vice President