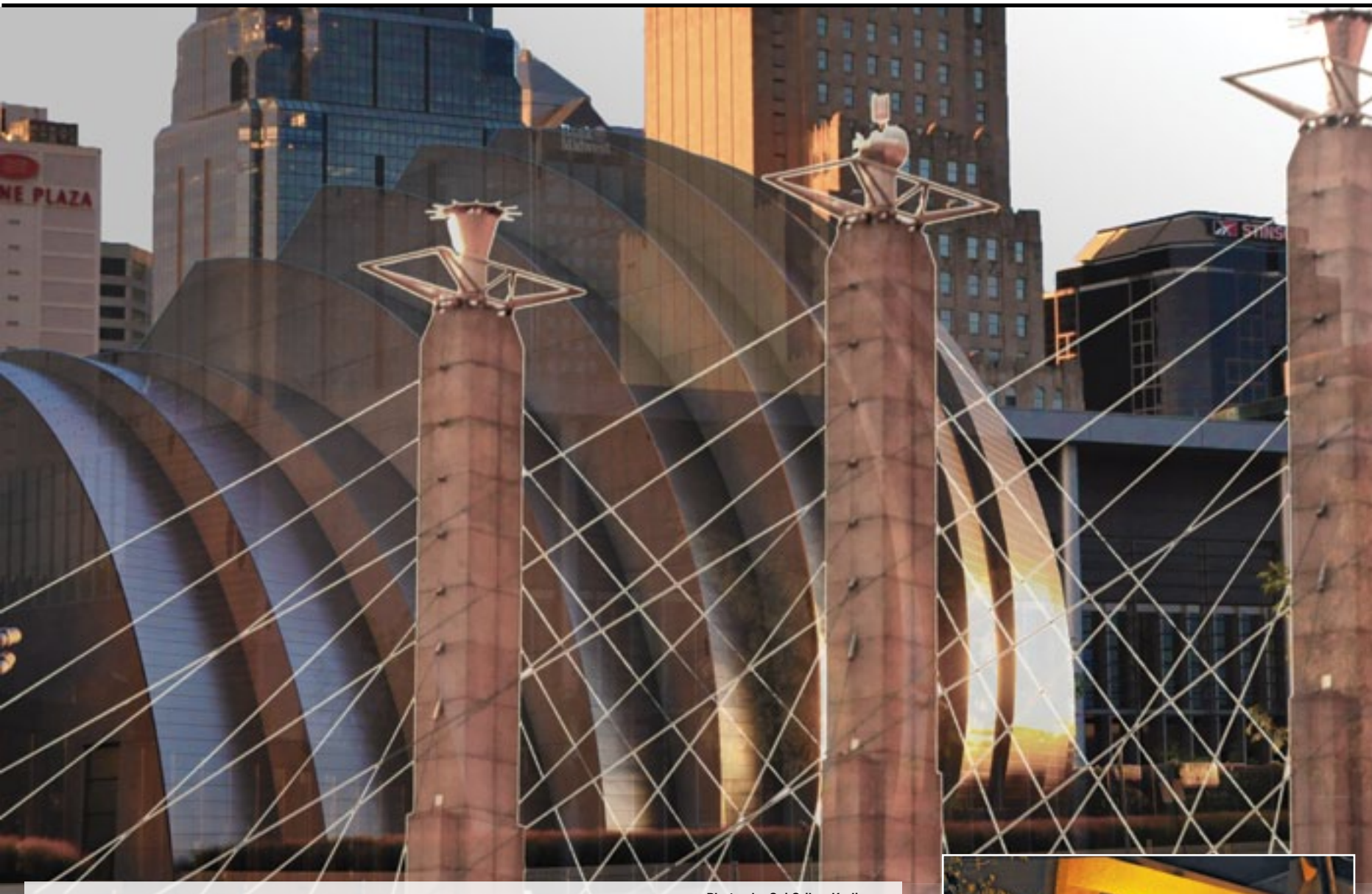


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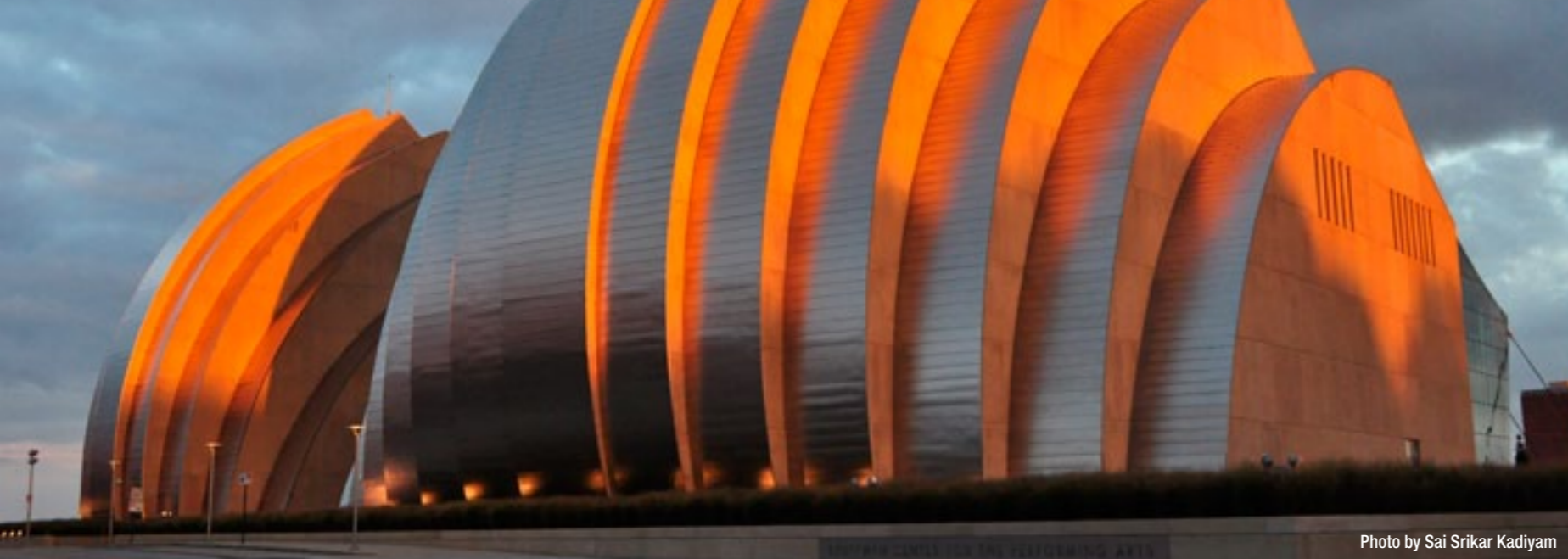


Photo by Sai Srikar Kadiyam

Feasibility studies show promise for downtown UMKC arts campus

Roze Brooks Senior Staff Writer
Nathan Zoschke Editor-in-Chief

A downtown campus for various UMKC arts programs has taken a leap closer to reality.

Discussion began in spring 2011, when Conservatory Dean Peter Witte first announced the idea.

At the time, it was just that - an idea, but one poised to gain civic endorsement.

Last fall, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce announced the downtown campus as one of its "Big 5" initiatives for the region.

The project also received accolades from the Downtown Council as a catalyst to bring students downtown and create spinoff development.

Since then, several programs in the College of Arts & Sciences have expressed interest in a move downtown. So have the Kansas City Repertory Theatre and KCUR, the local NPR affiliate housed in the 4825 Troost building.

In December, UMKC embarked on a four-part feasibility study which evaluated program needs, cost, site selection and impact of a downtown presence on the local economy and Volker campus.

Inadequate Conservatory facilities on the Volker campus and proximity to the Kauffman Center for the Performing

Arts have been cited as key reasons for a downtown move.

The Moshe-Safdie-designed Kauffman Center, which opened last September, has received international acclaim and led to Kansas City's listing as one of Frommer's Travel Guide's top 10 destinations of 2012.

In June, UMKC released the conclusion of the program planning, campus impact and economic impact studies to the general public, available online at www.info.umkc.edu/artscampus.

A fundraising feasibility study is still in the works to determine how private funding can be raised to cover the entire cost of the project.

Site selection narrows

The Program Planning Study narrowed the 12 original proposed locations down to three.

Prepared by Helix Architecture + Design, Integra Realty Resources and HGA Architects and Engineers, the study recommends a phased relocation of visual and performing arts programs over the next 20 to 30 years.

The first phase of construction, which would begin in three to five years, includes 171,000 square feet of space for the Conservatory and an estimated price tag of

\$88.2 million. If expanded to include 193,000 square feet, the cost of the first phase jumps to \$98 million.

A second phase could include the A&S Theatre Department and KC Rep; a third phase could include KCUR and the A&S departments of Communications Studies, Film Studies and Architecture, Urban Planning and Design.

If all programs are built, the cost is estimated at \$272.5 million.

Each of the 12 original sites was evaluated based on four different criteria sets: transit, cost, neighborhood and visibility.

"We had a busy summer," said Bob Simmons, associate vice chancellor of administration.

"After looking at a couple different sites, the feasibility study narrowed it down to three. I would say general sites, because even within a site there are 'fuzzy edges.'"

Barney Allis Plaza possesses the most precise perimeters and would require no repurposing of vacant buildings, since it is located above an underground parking garage. It is also owned entirely by the city, which would facilitate the property's acquisition.

Despite its proximity to performance venues like Bartle Hall, Municipal Auditorium and the Folly Theatre, it is also farthest from the Kauffman PAC.

The other two finalists are located in the Crossroads and flank the PAC. However, they consist of multiple properties with multiple owners.

The Crossroads South site would reach out from the southeast corner of the Kauffman at 17th and Wyandotte, extending south to 18th Street and east to Main Street.

The benefit of this site is its accessibility to the Volker campus along the Main Street MAX line. Existing buildings on the site could easily be reused to accommodate program needs.

Witte told KCPT's *The Local Show* he is adamant about utilizing the preexisting buildings at this site, while also constructing new ones.

The Crossroads Southwest site contains several vacant lots, warehouses and empty spaces that could provide a clean slate for the new campus. This location would extend west across Broadway and south to 18th Street.

The PAC sites provide a secondary advantage: synergy with the arts community in the Crossroads.

Barney Allis Plaza is smack dab in the middle of the Convention district, surrounded by massive hotels and convention center properties that create a pedestrian dead zone.

The Crossroads district is a high-traffic,

casual setting that possesses a better sense of urban connectivity.

"By intent, the study didn't say any of the sites were perfect," Simmons said.

The Program Planning Study also examined four other urban arts campuses as precedents for UMKC: Julliard's Eastman School of Music at New York City's Lincoln Center, Columbus State University in Georgia and Arizona State University in Phoenix.

The Economic Impact Study, conducted by the Mid-America Regional Council, concluded the construction of a Downtown Arts Campus and reuse of the Volker campus would create 409 jobs and more than \$22 million in personal disposable income over a 25-year period.

Finally, an in-depth fundraising feasibility study is in progress.

"That's really key because we've recognized all along that this is a project that is going to be reliant on private support to build and to operate," Simmons said.

The Campus Impact Study, conducted by UMKC, concluded a move downtown would free up space for other programs on the Volker campus to expand.

Amenities and upgrades

In recent years, the Conservatory's

enrollment has increased from 300 students to more than 500.

Some students may spend up to five hours a day in the Conservatory's practice rooms, which lack adequate soundproofing and handicap accessibility.

"Arts facilities have very specific requirements in terms of sound isolation, size and the number of spaces that the students need," Witte told *U-News* last fall.

The Conservatory's classrooms, performance and rehearsal venues are located throughout the Volker campus, though primarily in Grant Hall and the James C. Olson Performing Arts Center.

Practice rooms and recital spaces are small and limited in number, as some of this space was converted to faculty offices.

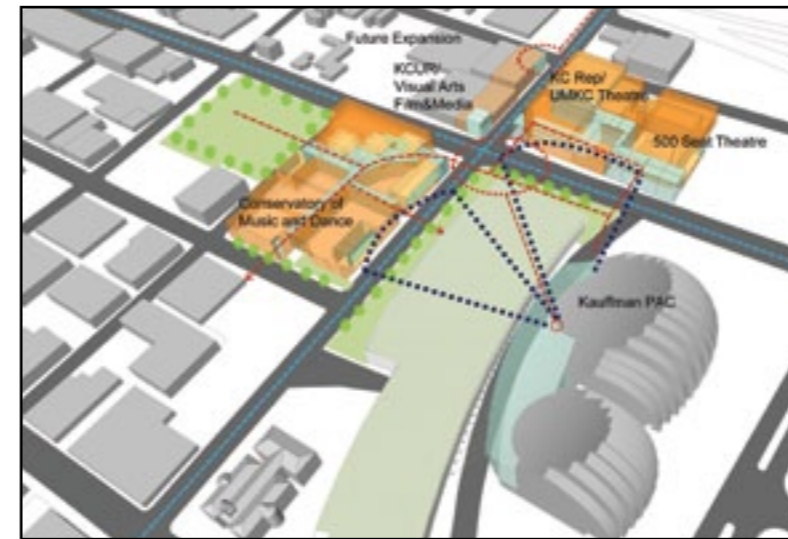
"Let's do the math here. Seven foot piano. Six foot room?" Witte told KCPT's *The Local Show*.

Two dance studios are currently available, though Witte said four are needed.

"We have been challenged for quite some time seeking a solution for space," Witte added.

Junior Kyle Hall, a music education major, acknowledged there is room for improvement.

"The Conservatory is just now starting to be recognized as a major player in the music world even with our less-than-adequate



Left: View of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts from 16th and Broadway.
Center: A possible location for the downtown arts campus on the West side of the Kauffman PAC.
Right: A possible location for the downtown arts campus on the East side of the Kauffman PAC.
Below: A possible location for the downtown arts campus, replacing Barney Allis Plaza.

By the numbers

\$165.5 million

Scenario 1: The entire Conservatory program relocates downtown, but without a new performance space. Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center is used when possible. White Recital Hall remains in use on the Volker Campus. The Kansas City Repertory Theatre moves downtown, and the A&S Theatre Department takes over space in the James C. Olson Performing Arts Center vacated by the Conservatory and KC Rep.

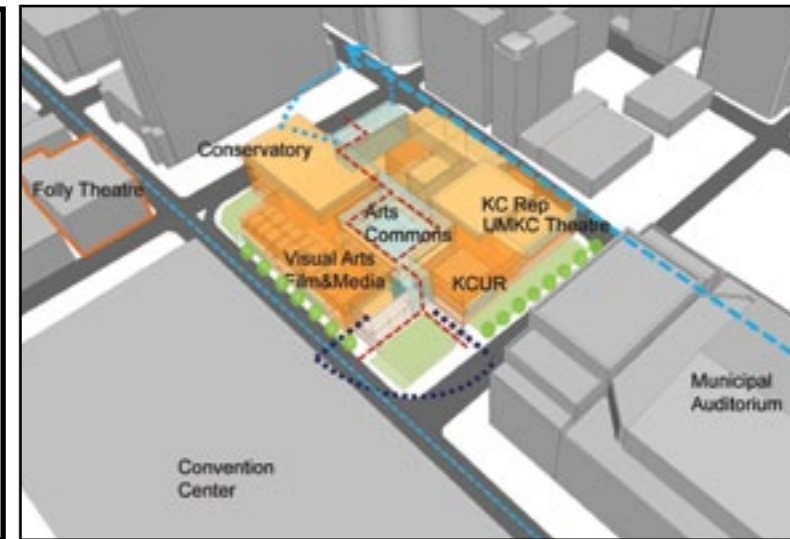
\$152.2 million

Scenario 2: The KC Rep and Theatre programs retain a stronger presence on the Volker campus, reducing costs.

\$272.5 million

Scenario 3: The Conservatory builds a new 100-seat recital hall. The KC Rep adds a new 500-seat theater, and the A&S Studio Arts programs move downtown in their entirety. An art gallery is constructed downtown.

Source: Downtown Arts Campus Executive Summary



Renderings courtesy of University Communications

facilities," he said.

Specifications vary for each of the programs considered in the feasibility study, but the all-encompassing theme is consolidation.

"[The Conservatory] would have more quantity, better size, better acoustics," Simmons said.

Theater space needs include technological advances catering to the design components of productions and more flexible spaces such as a black-box theater.

Some current performance spaces, such as White Hall, will still be used for their intended purposes.

What Students Say

Many Conservatory students are optimistic about the opportunity.

"If the Conservatory moves [downtown], I feel as though it will give the dancers and musicians the opportunity to actually get to know each other and work with each other," said dance major Danice Schilling. "I'm just in hopes that even with the new move we still get the support from UMKC students and recognition from the people visiting and living in downtown Kansas City."

Theatre minor Daniel Beeman also enjoys the idea of interdisciplinary cohesion.

"I think it's an interesting idea," he said. "It would definitely allow the Conservatory,

theater, art and performing arts students to be completely immersed in their field of study being in that area."

Hall is also positive about the endeavor.

"To have an internationally recognized arts campus right downtown next to an amazing PAC like the Kaufman Center would be a dream come true," he said. "I mean, all of the top music schools in the country have a similar setup."

However, some students see a downtown campus as an inconvenience.

Transportation is a concern for some, including music performance sophomore Willow Parsons.

"Conservatory students are required to take a certain amount of gen eds," she said. "I feel like getting from the downtown location to the Volker campus would be tiring. It would be a challenge to build schedules around the transportation time."

Senior Tony Sperruzza, urban planning and design major, shared a similar sentiment.

"How often do students really utilize the arts venues downtown from day to day?" he said. "The Volker campus isn't that far from some place like the Kauffman."

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TATTOO

of the week



Blake Burger

Kynslie Otte
Senior Staff Writer



For some, one tattoo is never enough. For junior Blake Burger, his first tattoo from June 2009 has remained his only and most important.

His tattoo is the Latin word "Pacem" on his left wrist, which means "Peace" in English.

Though tattoos depicting peace symbols or the simple desire for peace may seem common, Burger's incentive differs from the norm.

"My inspiration came from my persistent use of the word 'peace' and my dream of traveling abroad," Burger said.

Like most, Burger didn't get inked alone.

"A friend of mine went with me and got a tattoo in the same place," he said. "I love it because it's universal in so many ways."

Burger got his tattoo at a small parlor in Cape Girardeau, Mo. called "The Little Drummer" for \$30.

Tattoos have a reputation for being painful, but Burger disagreed.

"The most memorable part of my tattoo experience was the fact that it didn't hurt as much as I thought it might, and my friend was beside me getting ready to get one as well," he said.

kotte@unews.com

Friends and family have varied reactions to tattoos, and in Burger's case, his parents' reaction was humorous.

"My mom was angry and accused me of contracting AIDs, which definitely wasn't the case," he said. "My dad was nonchalant about it and said it could be worse."

Among Burger's friends, his tattoo was well received, which he didn't initially expect.

"My friends like it enough," he said. "It's nothing too crazy, it's respectable and it's small. Plus, it was something nobody expected from me. I was always the careful type, and never did anything spontaneously, so this was a shock for most of my friends."

Though Burger has remained satisfied with his single tattoo, he plans to get more tattoos in the future, but will take his time.

"I want to wait and find something really meaningful to me," he said. "I have found a few lines from books that I love, only I can't decide where on my body I want to put them."

If you or someone you know has a meaningful tattoo and would like to be featured in the "Tattoo of the Week" column, email kpohd7@mail.umkc.edu.

Travel Corner

Mexico City

Riley Mortensen
Senior Staff Writer

The bustling city of more than 20 million people, catchy Mexican tunes and city life made Mexico City my dream come true for 13 days this summer.

Although I have taken several years of Spanish, when it came down to conversing with native speakers, I knew not a lick of Spanish.

It's impossible to see everything in Mexico City in 13 days, but if you're going to try, the best way is to go with somebody who knows and lives in the area. I had two people more than willing to show me around.

The first, I met at UMKC my very first semester. Dan Moreno and I were fast friends, and a trip to his home country was inevitable.

I'm a traveler by heart; he's a native by birth. How could an opportunity like that be passed up?

Daniel introduced me to his friends and family, which is how I met the second handsome man, Axel Cornejo, who entertained me endlessly and despite the nearly 2,000 miles between us, is now my boyfriend.

When traveling to a country, you learn a few things.

1. A 5-foot-6 redhead with blue eyes is a rare sight in Mexico, and I received plenty of stares.

2. I'm not sure about this entire curse with the water nonsense, but I showered and drank right from the tap with no consequence.

3. Despite political corruption and the ever-present problem of the whole city sinking, Mexico City has more access to public transportation than Kansas City does to BBQ. It costs six pesos, or about 50 cents, to ride the subway round-trip. And taxis are just a few bucks to go nearly anywhere in the sprawling city.

4. On the subject of driving, in Mexico, you couldn't pay me enough to get behind the wheel of a car. I have no problem being the passenger of an expert, but to get around in Mexico, you need patience for the traffic you will encounter and a healthy dosage of aggressive and defensive driving. More aggressive than defensive if you ask me, but I was merely an innocent passenger.

5. It's amazing to travel to a country with the amount of history Mexico has. I am a museum junky and I got my fix for the year. The National Museum of Anthropology was one of my favorites.

6. The Frida Kahlo Museum, also known as the Blue House, is a close second on my museums list. Along with the artwork of Kahlo, I experienced an fascinating sound exhibit that takes visitors into the daily life of Frida herself.

7. We didn't even make it to the beach, and I still had the time of my life. So, when you think of Mexico, don't limit yourself to Cancun.

8. The five peso investment made in a "rain cape" was by far the most valuable purchase of my trip, as we were in the middle of what Daniel's mom, Joyce, said was the rain season.



Torre Latinoamericana, or 'Latin-American tower', was Mexico's tallest building from 1956 until 1984. The building withstood a 7.9 magnitude earthquake in 1957, gaining international acclaim.
Photo Riley Mortensen

9. You really haven't lived until you've gone out for a day with someone who speaks a different language. Axel's mom, Rocio, took me on a three hour double decker bus tour. We sat together on top of the bus, despite sweltering temperatures, and made sure not to miss the sites. We even made a stop to laugh over some much-needed ice cream. I will never forget.

10. Despite the agony of my own mother, I'll be back to Mexico City before Christmas. There's no doubt about it.

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Bartender's Corner

Kynslie Otte

Senior Staff Writer

Southwest Boulevard is brimming with delicious traditional Mexican restaurants, most of which offer Happy Hour deals involving meal specials and cheap margaritas. This culturally-rich area offers tasty food and other notable specials almost every day of the week.

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El Patrón

El Patrón Cocina and Bar, prides itself on its fresh seafood and margarita and mojito recipes. The restaurant is often praised for its fish tacos and chic environment.

El Patrón is slightly more expensive than other restaurants on Southwest Boulevard, but its Happy Hour

2905 Southwest Boulevard
11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday
11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Friday-Saturday

Ponak's

Ponak's is famous in Kansas City for its potent margaritas. These margaritas are uniquely crafted with Ponak's own special tequila. Customers can purchase Ponak's "Liquid Attitude," a bottle of pre-mixed margaritas, for \$20 daily.

The restaurant's Happy Hour is 3-6 p.m. every day. On Mondays, Ponak's offers specials on tacos and drinks. The Happy Hour menu varies by day of the week.

2856 Southwest Boulevard
11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday
11 a.m. – 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday
11 a.m. – 9 p.m. Sunday

Poco's Latin Cuisine

Poco's Latin Cuisine, much like El Patrón, is known for its fish tacos. It is more expensive than its neighboring restaurants, except during Happy Hour.

Happy Hour at Poco's is from 3-6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. House margaritas are \$3, domestic beers are \$2.50 and imported beers are \$3, along with well drinks.

3063 Southwest Boulevard
10 a.m. – 10 p.m. Monday-Friday
7 a.m. – 10 p.m. Saturday
7 a.m. – 3 p.m. Sunday

Taqueria Mexico

La Taquiera Mexico features authentic Mexican food and fast, friendly service. The restaurant's most popular deal is on Wednesday, with \$1 ground beef tacos and margaritas for \$1.99.

The margaritas are not as potent as Ponak's, but the price is unbeatable. The

tacos are always fresh, and small chunks of fried potatoes cooked with the beef give a unique taste.

La Taquiera's everyday menu offers traditional Mexican dishes such as chimichangas, tostadas, flautas and even tortas. Portion sizes are very large with reasonable prices.

910 Southwest Boulevard
Sunday-Thursday 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 9 a.m. – 3 a.m.

Rico's Tacos Lupe

Rico's Tacos Lupe offers one of the best taco specials in Kansas City on Tuesdays, with famous street tacos for only \$1 each.

The restaurant's street tacos consist of the customer's choice of meat with onions and cilantro, served with a wedge of lime on a corn tortilla. Choices of meat include asada (steak), pollo (chicken), lengua (beef tongue) and many others. Though the restaurant is small and offers limited

seating, the tacos are worth the wait.

Tortilla chips are provided for dine-in customers every day of the week, served with Rico's own salsa and bottles of habanera and a jalapeno puree.

At the entrance, Rico's also has a photo collage of customers who have eaten a considerable amount of tacos. Many boast eating up to 10, but one customer has eaten up to 23.

Rico's is unique

802 Southwest Boulevard
11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday
11 a.m. – 9 p.m. Tuesday
11 a.m. – 9 p.m. Thursday-Saturday

because of its "bring your own beer" policy. The restaurant does not serve alcohol, but patrons may bring their own alcoholic beverages if opened inside the restaurant. In a sense, this makes every hour Happy Hour at Rico's.

A Royal Liquor is conveniently located across the street, giving patrons an opportunity to grab a six-pack before the meal.

Dine-in and carry out are available at Rico's.

Photo by Sai Srikrar Kadiyam

Ask Phoenix

The process of perfection

Phoenix B. Rishon
Columnist

Recently I have received several questions regarding me: how I do drag, how long does it take, what is needed for the transformation, etc. At first, I was going to stray away from these inquiries since this column was created to benefit you, the reader, and give life advice. But then I realized everyone should learn what it takes to be a drag queen.

Drag is a creative performance art that goes against society and gender. We play with what society tells us is wrong and entertain people in the process. Drag performers entertain the audience by becoming a character of the opposite gender, and through this transformation inspire many people, including ourselves, to be whoever we want.

As a precursor to my drag transformation, I would like to point out every drag queen has a different style, technique and wardrobe. So to tell you how I do drag is not to say this is how drag should be done. I can only give you insight of my process.

The drag transformation is a long, grueling process to which some of you women could relate. We drag queens refer to the application of makeup as "painting" because we do not just apply powder and call it a day. We paint our face with stage makeup. If you know anything about painting, you know more layers are better. Not only do I need to cover the heavy five o'clock shadow left right after I shave, but I also need to cosmetically reconstruct my face to appear more feminine. It is all about making your face appear more feminine in your own style; hence why each drag queen has a different method.

This painting process can take a queen anywhere from 10 minutes to several hours. I usually allow myself two to three hours for the transformation because I do not like to be rushed. If I want people to give me money from their wallet, I have to

take my time and look my best. Makeup is only a fraction of the transformation. I then fasten myself with undergarments to cover any body hair and reconstruct my body accentuating the hips, tightening the waist and creating boobs. I also must hide that which is unique to my sex in order to create an illusion of its absence. Many assume this "tucking" process is painful and uncomfortable. While being tucked for several hours is not my favorite activity, nothing makes you feel more like a woman than giving yourself ovaries.

Once I cannot breathe from the body shapers and have literally lost my manhood, I put on a dress, clip on some jewelry, strap on some heels and maybe put a wig on my head, depending on the look. Even after perfection, I am still not ready.

Drag is more than just the look. I have to gain the confidence to dress like this in public and have a positive, sassy attitude. When performing, I become this character of expression and passion; a character many look up to and one which has changed my life.

I hope this has helped you understand what I do and who I am. Do not forget to send in your questions to Cjnz72@mail.umkc.edu!



Phoenix B. Rishon

Toodles for now,
Phoenix Rishon

satire

music review

Top 5 workout songs 1980-2012

Debbie Littles
Contributing Writer

As one of the top fat acceptance activists in the world (I even have 5 Facebook friends from Kyrgyzstan!), I have come to realize the importance of working out.

I even founded the official, unofficial UMKC Society of Enlightened Students for Size Acceptance (SESSA).

SESSA held its first semimonthly weigh-in at the industrial-sized scale at Ford's Claycomo assembly plant last Monday, and hosted a sit-in at Swinney Recreation Center afterwards to bring attention to our chosen plight.

Needless to say, we used furniture pads to move the exercise equipment so we could all sit down on the floor and protest. Standing-up protests require so much more physical effort.

The protest didn't go over so well. It might have been a good idea to fill out the proper Student Affairs paperwork and make arrangements with Campus Facilities beforehand.

To cut my poignant anecdote to the chase, you must be postulating one simple question:

Why has Debbie Littles suddenly become so concerned about health consciousness?

Because others like to discredit me when I say I'm a fat acceptance activist, especially when I mention that I flat out reject the idea of portion control. They say, "You're just a fat lazy *****. Go hit the treadmill." The challenge is on!

Every time I check in at Swinney on Foursquare, I feel compelled to share my music selection with my Facebook friends via Spotify. I'm sure each one of them wants to know what music I listen to.

Anyhow, here are the top 5 songs I like gettin' jiggy with when I jiggle my rolls on the elliptical bike.

1. Janet Jackson- "Nasty Boys"

Janet doesn't like boys who disrespect and neither do I. It's Ms. Littles if you nasty. With so many nasty boys taking peeks at my muffin rack, I do not know why Swinney hasn't decided to blast this song every 10 minutes as a reminder of why chivalry still matters.

2. Sir Mix-A-Lot- "Baby Got Back"

Every time my motivation wears off, I listen to this song. With all the pressure out there for girls to be pretty and petite, Sir Mix-A-Lot reminds us that most men actually prefer curvy women. This single is truly a one-hit wonder that has stuck with the times. I love blasting this song through my headphones whenever I do squats.

3. Rebecca Black- "Friday"

Whenever I forget what day it is, I reference Rebecca Black's hit YouTube performance. Gaining



Debbie Littles portrait by Aaron Cecil

national acclaim and elevating her to child prodigy status, and snagging market share from Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus overnight, Rebecca Black's talent makes her a perfect candidate for the UMKC Conservatory to recruit.

We would blow Julliard out of the water.

4. Fergie- "Fergalicious"

This Los Angeles artist outshines her British namesake in class, sophistication and musical talent. In her mid-2000s hit, when Fergie was still relevant, she offers everyone a catchy spelling lesson with a rhythm for locker room striptease post-workout.

5. Anything Nickelback, Creed, Hinder, Daughtry or '90s rock

Technically, these are separate artists, but they shall be treated as one for the purpose of this review. To my ears, it's all the same- I mean that in a good way. If four different bands can play the same guitar chords and sing the same songs and still have a separate identity, they must be doing something right commercially.

The lyrics typically involve getting wasted, high on a plane with cocaine, beating one's girlfriend (Trust me boys, I hit back!), remembering a lost girlfriend you cheated on, or driving a fancy pickup truck and living in a fancy house like the Playboy mansion with a private jet and the latest fashions.

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Looking ahead Part 2

Which of these Oscar contenders will be nominated this year?

Elizabeth Golden
Managing Editor

It may seem a little too early to talk about the Oscars, right? The ceremony isn't until February and the nominations haven't even come out, so why run an article about it? How often do theatre-goers look over the nominations only to realize they haven't heard of the nominees?

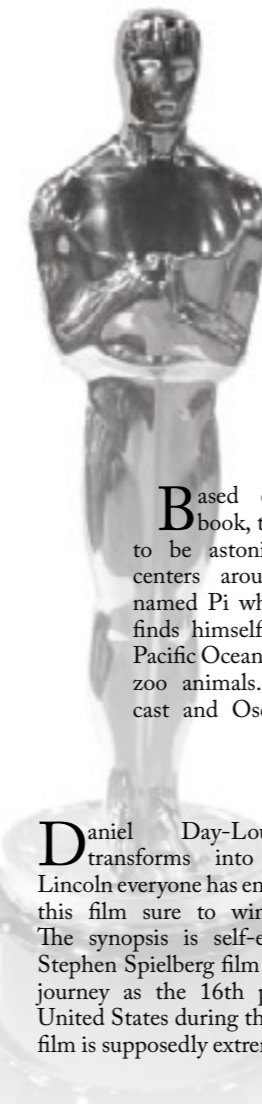
This column will provide insight about what to look for in the next few months to raise awareness of the year's best movies. Get ready for "Oscar Season."

In the past, Oscar nominated films were released between September and January. There are always exceptions, but for the most part, this is when potentially award-winning films are viewed for the first time.

Last year's best picture, "The Artist," premiered in January while "The King's Speech" (2010) came out in December. "The Hurt Locker" of 2009 followed this pattern with its October debut. "Slumdog Millionaire" (2008) joined the ranks with its January premiere. The list goes on, and the pattern hasn't been broken since 2005.

Each film will be analyzed based on content, actors, writers and directors. Some content tends to be more Oscar-worthy than others, so only these films are listed. It would be impossible to name the top nominees or select a winner at this point, so the rest is up to each reader. What films will be in the Oscar running for this year?

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The Twilight Saga - Breaking Dawn Part 2

As much as it pains me to even mention this sad excuse for a teen film, we must look at the facts. The final film of every big series has always been

nominated for at least a couple awards. This film will most likely see nothing more than a best visual effects nomination.



Life of Pi

Based on the best-selling book, the film is guaranteed to be astonishing. "Life of Pi" centers around an Indian boy named Pi who, after a shipwreck, finds himself drifting around the Pacific Ocean with the most vicious zoo animals. With an unknown cast and Oscar winning director

Ang Lee ("Brokeback Mountain" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"), this film is bound to win Best Adapted Screenplay at the very least. Best Director and Best Cinematography nominations are also likely. Be sure to check out "Life of Pi" on November 21st.



Lincoln

Daniel Day-Louis flawlessly transforms into the Abraham Lincoln everyone has envisioned, making this film sure to win Best Makeup. The synopsis is self-explanatory. This Stephen Spielberg film tells of Lincoln's journey as the 16th president of the United States during the Civil War. This film is supposedly extremely in-depth, as

most Spielberg pictures are. Sally Field, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Tommy Lee Jones also make up this all-star cast. Much like Spielberg films in the past, "Lincoln" will most likely be nominated for several Oscars, but will walk away with few. This film will be in theatres November 9th.



Anna Karenina

Phenomenal British director Joe Wright directs another book adaptation. "Pride and Prejudice" and "Atonement," both Oscar nominated adaptations, were under his direction. Wright has worked closely with Keira Knightly in many of his films, this one included. Jude Law also stars in this potentially Oscar nominated performance. "Anna Karenina" follows the title character in her life-changing journey set in 19th century

Russia. Strangely, many of the best potential films this year seem to be set in the 19th century. Though the film's content may be depressing, Wright always has a way of adding light-hearted humor to his work. The chances of "Anna Karenina" winning best picture may be slim, but this film is still a major contender for best actor/actress and best director. This film hits theatres November 16th.



Les Miserables

2012 seems to be the year of book adaptations. Much like "Life of Pi" and "Anna Karenina," this film was also adapted from the best-selling novel by Victor Hugo. Set in 19th century France, "Les Miserables" focuses on a man who seeks redemption after paroled from prison. This film also has deeper layers dealing with the nature of humanity and broken dreams.

Directed by Oscar winner Tom Hooper

("The King's Speech"), this film is sure to receive several nominations and possibly a few wins. Hugh Jackman, Russell Crow, Anne Hathaway and Amanda Seyfried also add to this astonishing masterpiece. Hooper has directed three actors in Oscar winning roles and it is likely a couple members of this cast will also walk away winners. Be sure to check it out December 14th.



'En Plein Air'



Brush Creek Art Walk exhibit comes to UMKC

Riley Mortensen Senior Staff Writer

The UMKC Gallery of Art partnered with the first Brush Creek Art Walk to present the exhibition of En Plein Air, showing through Sept. 11.

During the art walk, which took place over a three day period in late July, painters took their positions along Brush Creek from Roanoke Road east to Elmwood to paint in the open air, or in French, *en plein air*.

The UMKC gallery divides the paintings into zones according to the area the painter depicted. Each zone has a first and second, as well as a few honorable mentions. Paul Dorell of Kansas City's Leopold Gallery judged this event.

Cruising through the gallery, one can see a variety of mediums, from oil to acrylic to watercolor.

To top it off, all of the works are for sale and range in price from \$100 to \$3,000.

The opening reception on Aug. 31 brought in around 160 people, including the artists, their friends and family and community members who follow the *en plein air* style.

"The gallery aims for things that are more diverse and experimental so we can be on par with some of the bigger galleries around," said Mae McCurry, a graduate gallery assistant. "We're just trying to make a name for ourselves in the

community."

This is the first exhibition that McCurry has worked on with the UMKC gallery.

McCurry said the task of hanging each piece was daunting. Even on the opening day the gallery had to let some paintings go simply because there wasn't enough room to accommodate them all.

"This type of show was definitely not what I expected, but I think it will help us to get more people into the gallery that normally wouldn't come and build a relationship with them," McCurry said.

Despite heavy rain during the opening reception, Carole Roemer decided to pay the gallery a visit.

"I attended this while the artists were painting," Roemer said. "It was so hot, but they were out there anyway hot or not. Everyone seemed very enthused about it and the artists loved being a part of it."

The Gallery of Art currently has eight exhibits planned for this year, including the end of the year student exhibition.

Next up, the gallery is finalizing details for *POP!*, a series of social happenings. Basically, the exhibition will be like a trading post type deal, and guests will be invited to participate in activities or can simply enjoy witnessing the event. For more information on the upcoming exhibit, visit www.pophappenings.org.

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Community members came to campus to view various painted scenes of Brush Creek.

Photo by Riley Mortensen

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cult classic review

Religious 'Dogma' provides endless entertainment

Kevin Smith's 'Dogma' is a memorable mockery

Kynslie Otte

Senior Staff Writer

"Dogma" is arguably one of the best and most controversial comedies of the '90s, addressing the divisive topic of religion and struggles in one's faith. Despite its 1999 release, this cult classic's risqué plot based on Catholic doctrine remains relevant to today's society amidst continuous religious conflict.

With an all-star lineup featuring Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Salma Hayek, Alan Rickman, Jason Lee, Chris Rock, George Carlin and Alanis Morissette, the film's cast expertly delivers humor and starkly contrasting characters, both good and evil.

The film's plot revolves around two fallen angels, Bartleby (Affleck) and Loki (Damon). Loki was God's angel of death until Bartleby convinced him to drunkenly resign. As a result, Loki and Bartleby were banished from heaven and forced to spend the rest of eternity in Wisconsin, a place deemed worse

than hell.

An anonymous tip-off leads the pair to a loophole in Catholic doctrine which can allow their return to heaven. Loki and Bartleby must only cut off their wings, walk through the doors of a church in New Jersey and die as humans. Based on the religious concept of God's infallibility, Bartleby and Loki's successful return to heaven would result in the end of human existence.

Metatron (Rickman), the voice of God, appears to a woman named Bethany Sloane to tell her she is the last Scion, and has been chosen by God to stop Bartleby and Loki. During her journey, she discovers she is the last living descendant of Jesus Christ.

God (Morissette) is unable to resolve the situation herself because she occasionally returns to earth as a human to play skee-ball. On her last visit, she finds herself trapped in the body of a comatose man, unable to return to heaven.

Sloane is aided by two unlikely "prophets," Jay (Jason Mewes) and

Silent Bob (Kevin Smith), Rufus (Rock), the 13th apostle who claims he isn't in the Bible because he's black and Serendipity (Hayek), a muse with writer's block.

Sloane's journey proves amusing, filled with witty dialogue and multiple jabs at Catholicism. God depicted as a woman also extends the film's controversy.

Rickman does a fantastic job of portraying Metatron as obedient, wise and helpful, but also gives his character many human qualities, such as sarcasm and an affinity for tequila.

Affleck's performance as Bartleby is one of his career's best. Affleck gives the character finesse, portraying him as witty, thoughtful and intensely vengeful. Bartleby's development as the plot progresses is nothing shy of ingenious.

"Dogma" was director Smith's fourth film and one of the most popular among fans. The film utilizes many wide-angle shots, a trademark of Smith's productions. His highly stylized directing gives audiences an interesting

perspective while creating visually appealing action scenes.

His famously vulgar characters, Jay and Silent Bob, provide comic relief while playing pivotal roles in the plot. Though crass and immature, the two prove no one is beyond redemption with faith.

Using Biblical characters may seem risky, but each character's conflict becomes real and relatable, showing how even ethereal beings fear similar human concepts such as loneliness, struggling faith and damnation.

Smith's decision to give Affleck and Damon contrasting personalities in the leading roles was wise. The chemistry between the two becomes obvious onscreen while driving the plot and foreshadowing inevitable conflict.

Loki and Bartleby show the harshness of enforcing traditional Biblical commandments, seen best during a bus ride when Loki shoots a man in the head for committing adultery. This raises questions such as whether or not these Biblical violations deserve severe



Photo Courtesy of Google

punishment in today's society.

Due to the film's sensitive plot content, its release was delayed. Smith received at least two death threats, and Catholic organizations in several countries organized protests to stop the film's release.

Despite causing vast religious conflict, "Dogma" saw unexpected success in the box office, grossing roughly \$30 million. Most critics found the film mediocre, but audience reception was positive.

"Dogma" is funny, thought provoking and borderline blasphemous. For Smith fans and audiences that find religious mockery humorous, this provocative comedy is a must-see.

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movie review

The Less than Premium Rush

High-speed thriller struggles to find consistency

Elizabeth Golden

Managing Editor

Cycling along the streets of New York City may be a daunting task, but Joseph Gordon-Levitt makes it seem easy. Though exciting from start to finish, "Premium Rush" lacks a consistent tone along with other key elements, making the film slightly lackluster.

Set in constant motion, "Premium Rush" focuses on the lives of bike messengers and the constant battle to stay alive on the road. Dodging speeding cars, avoiding oblivious pedestrians and the constant fear of being struck by a car door are all part of the job for Wilee (Gordon-Levitt), who is considered "the best on the road."

When an unlikely shadow begins to follow him on his route, Wilee realizes he may face greater danger than he expected.

Overall, the production aspects of the film are solid. The acting is exceptional, which viewers may expect from Gordon-Levitt. Although he may appear douchey at times, he still manages to convincingly play this role.

"Premium Rush" mainly struggles with consistency. The story bounces back and forth, failing to provide a complete picture. This is an interesting technique if executed correctly, but director David Koepp fails to flawlessly transition each scene through the storyline.

Koepp is hardly a newcomer in the filmmaking industry. This big blockbuster director also wrote hits

such as "Jurassic Park" and "Spider-Man" and worked alongside Spielberg in several major films. It is disappointing to see his failed directing attempt with "Premium Rush."

The film lacks major depth, but that may be the point. "Premium Rush" is all about the speed and adrenaline rush. Action is another pertinent point in this thriller, which Koepp manages to successfully portray. His precision while directing this film is one aspect which definitely makes "Premium Rush" worth watching.

Another major issue in this film deals with the plot. Nothing unique or different occurs, and the film's villain comes across as annoying instead of scary. He's the kind of character who makes the audience



Photo Courtesy of Google

wish for his inevitable death.

Perhaps unintentional, some parts come across as extremely comical, almost in a slapstick way. Maybe the film's hidden motive is to depict a hilariously unrealistic snapshot of life. If this was the intent, it negates prior criticism, because "Premium Rush" definitely achieved its goal.

The film, with its lack of content, isn't bad by any means, but fails to stand out. As a whole, "Premium

Rush" tends to irritate and annoy audiences more than amuse. Though funny and entertaining at times, there are few parts worthy of praise.

"Premium Rush" is a great film for mindless entertainment with a solid emotional center, but offers nothing else for the viewer.

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Disclaimer: The views of individual writers expressed below in this section do not represent the official stance of *U-News*. *U-News* welcomes participation from all UMKC students. Letters to the editor may be submitted to Editor-in-Chief Nathan Zoschke, nzoschke@unews.com.

Weeping over the WEPT

Replace useless test with English 225 final



Kharissa Forte
Senior Staff Writer

The Written English Proficiency Test causes quite the commotion among undergraduate students at UMKC. The exam is a requirement to graduate and a prerequisite for all writing intensive (WI) courses. Offered twice each semester, students who have completed 45 hours and who have successfully completed English 225 can enroll to take the WEPT through Pathway. One week before the exam, students must purchase the WEPT packet, a compilation of articles about a single topic, for \$5, in preparation for the test. The day of the WEPT, students are allotted three hours to compose an argumentative essay based on the packet material. Attending tutoring sessions and workshops conducted by the Writing Studio in order to better prepare for the WEPT is highly encouraged. Sound a little intimidating? I thought so. In fact, I prolonged taking the WEPT until I had no choice but to take it the summer before my senior year in order to enroll in classes that I needed to take this semester and in the spring. I studied my packet intently day and night in order to ensure myself that I would pass the test. I even skipped one of my classes

Continued on Page 19

Pro and Con of University name change

Make sure student voices are heard in name change discussions

Roze Brooks
Senior Staff Writer

When Chancellor Leo Morton announced a future discussion pertaining to a potential name change for UMKC, many people likely cocked their head to the side and asked, “Why?” The better question to ask is, “Why does it matter?” How UMKC, or the University of Kansas City (UKC) if the name change takes place, carries on after the decision is made is what’s most important. Transitioning to a new name shouldn’t

inhibit the goals and values of the campus. Advances are made each semester to better the campus in every way possible, including new construction, student-faculty connectivity and overall consideration for what students want from their education. As long as the debate over which name-change decision should be made doesn’t distract from more pressing issues, no harm can come from opening the dialogue between students and administration on an issue affecting everyone involved. If UMKC students feel they’re involved in this significant decision, the relationship between students and administration will strengthen. Trusting authority isn’t always at the top of college student’s to-do list. Assurance of research and thorough consideration of how this change would affect the campus also helps to eliminate skepticism. This proposal was created with meticulous consideration and is worth exploring. And while a major concern is the price of changing the name, it costs nothing to ask questions and have discussions. Diverging from the stigma that UMKC is overcast by Mizzou won’t alleviate the misconception. Retracting back to UKC doesn’t eliminate the university’s association with the University of Missouri system. If there is an outstanding disposition against another school from the system, this should be addressed by reaching out to the campus and discussing how to better unify both student bodies. A name change could give the campus an empowering stature boost, allowing a metaphorical disconnect from the UM system. It



would make the university more discernible against the other schools in the system. And just face it, this institution will never possess an acronym that is easy to pronounce in two syllables like UMSL, so there is no point in trying too hard. rbrooks@unews.com

Cost of name change needs to be justified

Elizabeth Golden
Managing Editor

Chancellor Leo Morton announced a name change proposal in May for the University of Missouri – Kansas City. The change from UMKC to the University of Kansas City is speculated to raise awareness about the university and attract the most “talented students,” according to Morton. Although the chancellor may have valid reasons to back up his beliefs, this proposed change has a much greater downside. The primary concern is the unnecessary cost of the change, along with several smaller issues. This is not to criticize the chancellor or the university, but it is still important to acknowledge the opinions of the student body. When University of Missouri – Rolla changed names, the cost totaled about \$500,000. UMKC

insists financing will come from private donors and tuition would not increase to fund the potential name change. This solves the cost issue, but it’s interesting to think of what else this money could do for the university. In-state tuition for a full-time UMKC undergraduate taking 15 credits costs \$4,650 per semester, or \$9,300 annually. If this generous \$500,000 contribution were applied to financial aid, more than 50 students would receive a full ride to cover annual tuition and fees. If all of the 9,000 undergraduate students were given part of this money as a scholarship, each would receive \$55. This may not seem like much, but the amount would begin to add up. If instead, every deserving student were given part of the scholarship, this amount would be substantially greater. Let’s assume one textbook averages at \$100. This means 5,000 books would be provided for the cost of the name change. Annual rates for on-campus room and board vary from \$6,203 for a four-person double suite in the residence halls to more than \$9,000 for a one-bedroom apartment in Oak Place. This does not include a meal plan. More than 50 students could cover a majority of room and board if \$500,000 was applied. Above all else, if the university really wants to improve its image, why not spend the money to improve specific programs or marketing campaigns? Many research programs could make use of \$500,000. The university prides itself on being the only major research university in the metro area, begging the question of, “Why wouldn’t the money be spent on improving these programs?” Administration should better justify the cost, especially when dropping “Missouri” from the school’s title may lead to obvious drawbacks. Let’s face it, Kansas City: most people outside the area have no idea the city isn’t in Kansas. By dropping “Missouri,” the university is only increasing this problem. According to half of the world, The University of Kansas City will be located in Kansas. Chancellor Morton believes changing the name would distinguish the university from the other schools in the Missouri system while also “better identifying the university with its mission.” The mission statement of UMKC’s strategic plan mentions the school’s urban ambitions. Most of Kansas isn’t exactly urban.



“UMKC’s mission is to lead in life and health sciences; to deepen and expand strength in the visual and performing arts; to develop a professional workforce and collaborate in urban issues and education; and to create a vibrant learning and campus life experience.” Perhaps the name change could indirectly help the university to eventually identify with the statement, but wouldn’t other uses of \$500,000, such as scholarships or research funding, have a far greater and more immediate impact? egolden@unews.com

Don’t overlook 18th and Vine

Why Kansas city should cherish its jazz district

Tyren Rushing
Staff Writer

It was unimaginable to me four months ago that I could fall in love with anything on the Missouri side of Kansas City. I am a Kansan, and a hardcore Kansan at that. I take pride in our sunflowers, I love my Jayhawks, I say “pop,” not “soda” and I absolutely detest Missouri. Four months ago, I started my internship at the American Jazz Museum and my eyes were opened to the greatness of the most overlooked, underappreciated, severely under-promoted neighborhood in Kansas City, the 18th and Vine District. It’s amazing that a place so spectacular is such an afterthought in a city constantly struggling for national respect and acclaim. The 18th and Vine District is Kansas City’s ticket to the big leagues of tourism, but it’s treated like a minor leaguer with a bad back. The names of neighborhoods like Times Square, Navy Pier, The French Quarter and most comparatively, Beale Street, are identified instinctively with their respective host cities. What have New York, Chicago, New Orleans and Memphis done better than what Kansas City has done with 18th and Vine to obtain such recognition for those destinations? One answer is the other cities simply care. Although 18th and Vine is

arguably more important to Kansas City’s history than the Plaza and the Power and Light District, the jazz district doesn’t share the limelight. Go to www.18thandvinedistrict.org/, and you will find a website that is outdated and underfunded, much like the district it represents. Go to www.countryclubplaza.com/, and you will see a sleek, modern site that it is better funded and updated. It doesn’t stop at the web. When you drive down I-35, there is a barrage of signs boasting about upcoming fashion events taking place on the Plaza, Zona Rosa and P&L. Why couldn’t 18th and Vine be included in this or other joint ventures among the city’s entertainment districts? A more complex answer is the “dividing line” that Troost Avenue typically represents. Troost has long served as the divider between the haves and have-nots in Kansas City. Mayor Sly James even referenced it as the “Berlin Wall” in his Town Hall Forum last year on campus. Unfortunately for 18th and Vine, it lies east of Troost and therefore doesn’t get the shine that Kansas City’s other entertainment districts receive. P&L, the Plaza and Westport are west of Troost and receive plenty of recognition and support. The city sunk \$850 million into Power and Light. The Plaza has a televised lighting ceremony, and Westport has become synonymous with drunken fun and good eats more so than any other local destination. The All-Star Game festivities cast a spotlight on 18th and Vine, but only because the Negro League Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum are housed in the district. Jazz and baseball are two great Kansas City traditions right up there with barbecue and fountains. So why can’t 18th and Vine see this kind of limelight regularly? It is the most significant historic black neighborhood in Kansas City. During the Jim Crow era of Kansas City history, African-Americans boycotted shops downtown and began to practice self-sufficiency by shopping primarily at 18th and Vine. This is the block where the Negro League was founded in 1920, where Prohibition never existed under Thomas Pendergast’s reign over Jackson County and where Charlie Parker mastered the saxophone. The abundance of jazz clubs, gambling spots, barbecue joints and shopping once made this area a cultural hub that people from all walks of life would visit, regardless of skin color. The Plaza is praised for pioneering the planned outdoor shopping center, but the fact that it was segregated for more than 40 years is often overlooked. The legacy of segregation can still be seen in 2012. Neighborhoods west of Troost are mostly white and affluent; neighborhoods east of Troost are predominately African-American and working class. The Troost divide causes areas like 18th and Vine to have a negative connotation. As one who spends five-to-six days each week in the district interning and covering concerts, I can tell you that 18th and Vine is as about as safe as one can get in the city. There have been more shootings at the Plaza in the last few years. The people are friendly and diverse in the jazz district and the streets and sidewalks are some of the most well-maintained I’ve seen in Missouri, which is saying a lot. More importantly, entertainment options are endless. If you want to eat, the Jukehouse has a great menu. Danny’s Big and Easy brings delightful Cajun cuisine to the Midwest, and the 9th Inning is a state-of-the-art sports bar that serves a mean turkey burger. The legendary Arthur Bryant’s is up the street on the corner of 17th and Brooklyn. For entertainment, the Blue Room Jazz Club has live music Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On Monday, it features an open jam session. The Gem Theater hosts a variety of events,



including the upcoming Jammin’ at the Gem concert series. The Jukehouse goes full-scale bar every night and hosts the popular Soul Sessions poetry and music sessions every Monday night. Ninth Inning hosts a plethora of sporting events with crystal clear HDTV’s throughout the place. Danny’s Big and Easy also hosts live music and offers full bar service. The area recently hosted the Soul Food Festival, and the Rhythm & Ribs Music Festival is Oct. 13. But most importantly of all, 18th and Vine is a historical landmark and should be cherished and upheld by city officials. Beale Street in Memphis is comparable in terms of population and musical significance. Beale Street is a full-scale tourist attraction. The FedEx Forum is connected to it, and there’s family and adult entertainment year round. There are millions of both private and corporate dollars in the place to keep it thriving. Kansas City has not shown this support for 18th and Vine, and the city knows it. trushing@unews.com kforte@unews.com

Continued from Page 18

the day of the test in order to further confirm that I was good to go. After I took the WEPT, I realized that it wasn’t as deep as I, my professors, or the Communications Studies department made it out to be. I began to question why we were even required to take the exam in the first place. The answer I received was found on the Writing Studio’s website: “...to determine the quality of undergraduate academic writing.” In my opinion, that objective could be met by evaluating the grades that students earn from English 225. Professor Robert Unger has taught writing intensive courses at UMKC for 16 years, one of which is Intro to Journalism. Of the WEPT, Unger said, “I can see no purpose for the WEPT. It doesn’t predict who can do well. It doesn’t predict who can do poorly. As near as I can tell, its only purpose is to cause students time, money and aggravation.” In hindsight, I concur. Mercury Association President Andreina Byrne works at the Writing Studio, where students can receive help preparing for the WEPT. “I think the WEPT often stresses students out more than it should; I don’t know if it is the right way to go about gauging a student’s writing,” said Byrne. I could not agree more. “Gauging a student’s writing” is the precise goal of the WEPT, yet perhaps it is an idea that could have been more thought out. My suggestion is simple. If students must take the WEPT, so be it. However, instead of making the WEPT a huge ordeal, administer it as the final for English 225. Ironically, this is what the WEPT replaced. If these changes are made, students still have to take the test, but it is directed in a fashion that saves time, \$5 and unnecessary stress. kforte@unews.com

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A slice of Kansas City history: Union Station Massacre, June 17, 1933.

Cartoon by Aaron Cecil

GAMES

Sudoku

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