

Stay-at-home order issued for Kansas City metro

Lucas Cuni-Mertz

Editor-in-Chief

In an increased effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, Mayor Quinton Lucas has issued a "Stay at Home" order for residents of Kansas City and Johnson, Jackson and Wyandotte counties beginning Tuesday, March 24 at 12:01 a.m.

Residents are required to stay home except for "essential activities." These activities include grocery shopping and trips to the pharmacy, doctor's office, banks, and restaurants. Outdoor activity will still be allowed, so long as individuals comply with social distancing requirements.

"As community spread of COVID-19 continues throughout our region, we are taking aggressive action to flatten the curve and protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters," said Lucas. "We are asking our entire community to unite to prevent the spread of this virus and appreciate everyone's cooperation during this time."

Gatherings such as weddings, funerals and memorial



(Linkedin)

services will be prohibited.

Violations will be punishable by a \$500 fine and up to six months in jail.

The order is in effect until April 24 and will be updated as needed.

Kansas City joins a growing list of city

and state governments that have issued similar orders, including St. Louis County and the states of New York, California and Illinois.

The metro area continues to see a rising number of cases, with 13 in Kansas City

and five in Jackson County. There are 74 cases statewide and three deaths.

lac2m2@mail.umkc.edu

Students forced to move off-campus, set to receive 45% housing refund

Caleb Wilson

Staff Writer

After a week of confusion, students in the dorms have been given their marching orders. Due to the quarantines and social distancing measures put in

place to slow the spread of the coronavirus, those living on-campus, with a few exceptions, will be required to move out as soon as possible.

Moving out is mandatory for students unless they have nowhere else to go and apply for an exception.

However, there is a small positive for them: Chancellor Agrawal announced last week that UMKC would be offering some refunds, similar to the actions taken by the other universities in the UM system.

If a student living in on-campus housing moves out by

April 3, they will be offered a 45% refund of the semester's housing costs.

Students will have spent 10 weeks living on campus if they move out by that date, or roughly 60% of the semester, so the offer appears to be on the generous side.

The chancellor remarked on how rapidly these policies had to be developed in light of these unique circumstances.

"Since the advent of coronavirus locally, we've been making rapid decisions to keep our students, faculty and staff safe and healthy," said Agrawal. "Even two weeks ago, it would have been hard to imagine the profound changes to daily life on campus and in our community."

Regarding potential refunds for other campus costs such as the recreation center and parking, Agrawal stated that plans were in development.

For comparison, MU announced that they will be refunding students \$80 per person following the close of their recreation center. As UMKC and the other system schools seem to have closely mirrored the actions of each other regarding the housing refund (all schools offering the 45% discount, with slightly different move-out dates), it is likely that UMKC will land close to this mark.

ccwykr@mail.umkc.edu



Students in Oak Hall and Johnson Hall are required to move out, but can receive a 45% housing refund. (The KC Star)

Referendum rejected, Roos for Reform sweeps SGA Election

Sam Bellefy

News Editor



The Roos for Reform Party swept the SGA election, and will come into office May 1. *From left:* Kole Kenney, comptroller; Brandon Henderson, president; Mahreen Ansari, vice president; Victor Michimani, internal affairs director. (Roos for Reform instagram)

The Roos for Reform Party (RFRP) has pulled a close victory out of the heavily contested SGA Election. Winning by only one vote, Brandon Henderson has become the president-elect for the SGA, with his running mate Mahreen Ansari winning the VP spot. Henderson won 401 (41%) votes compared to the runner up, incumbent Justice Horn, who had 400 (40%).

Kole Keeney, the RFRP member running for the comptroller position pulled ahead with 37% of the vote. Victor Michimani, also from the RFRP, secured a win with 39% of the vote.

All elected candidates will come into office on May 1.

The Ables-Austin Health and Wellness Referendum, which would have increased UMKC's Counseling and Student Health Services Fee incrementally to \$95, was shot down, with over 55% of students voting no. The referendum had been the primary objective of the SGA so far this year.

In total, 977 students voted on RooGroups for this year's election, compared to 1415 last year. Voting took place during the current campus closure, which may have had an effect on turnout.

Despite the closures around UMKC and Kansas City due to the coronavirus pandemic, UNews will continue to cover developments in the SGA.

samuelbellefy@mail.umkc.edu

Coronavirus forces professors to adapt to online instruction

Gavyn Do

Staff Writer

Students can say goodbye to their classroom desks and hello to their kitchen tables. Classes have gone online at UMKC, and they are here to stay.

Though there are no confirmed cases involving UMKC faculty, staff or students, classes have moved online for the remainder of the semester to limit exposure to the disease. This follows suit with a host of colleges and schools around the country that have gone online in the wake of the pandemic.

Many professors have exclusively taught in-person classes throughout their tenure at UMKC, but with the spread of the coronavirus and subsequent social distancing measures, in-person teaching has hit a dead end. As professors have migrated to online platforms such as Zoom for their lectures and assignments, there has been a learning curve.

"Personally, it's a challenge because I've never taught an online class, and we had to quickly move our classes online this week," UMKC communication studies professor Angela Elam said. "I'm still not comfortable with it, but it was easier than I expected, and Zoom allowed me to see and talk to students, which is good, though it's not the same as seeing a whole classroom since all their faces aren't on



Zoom has become one of the primary platforms for teaching online-only classes. (zoom.us)

the screen at one time."

Elam noted how a planned class trip to the local KCUR radio station was sidelined by the virus.

"On Thursday, the class was supposed to tour KCUR. I followed KCUR's rules and kept six feet away from the announcer while he explained his airshift and the studio set-up," Elam said. "I think the class got something out of it, but it's definitely not the same as being there."

Another UMKC communication

studies professor, Linda Kurz, expressed the ease she had due to her teaching online classes.

"I'm happy that I have been teaching online and that the students didn't have to transition from face-to-face to an online class," Kurz said. "However, it doesn't really lessen the stress load on anyone about the new normal."

With her experience, she is assisting other professors in adjusting to an online classroom setting.

"I've been trying to help other facul-

ty in the department who have not taught online at all," Kurz said. "We're all trying to adjust to the new normal, but we need to be very hopeful that we will get through all of this."

UMKC physics professor Robert Riggs, who teaches several online classes, still preferred face-to-face education.

"I think the best teaching and learning occurs in a classroom—live—with real humans," Riggs said. "Not because it's easier, but because no real teaching takes place without building community first."

He also noted his concern among the organization of exams and the rising potential of cheating with the days winding down in the semester.

"In my regular online classes we have lots of little quizzes and the cheating seems nominal in those classes," Riggs stated. "Now that my two large lecture classes are online, this is going to be an issue. I have students who have designs on highly selective fields. The stakes to them are high. I'm still trying to figure out what I'm going to do. My colleague has a way, but there is way too much more technology involved and sounds too stressful."

Alongside Elam, Kurz and Riggs, each UMKC professor will be forced to find a way to move their class online as the coronavirus situation worsens.

gavyn.truong.do@mail.umkc.edu

Coronavirus quick facts

Sam Bellefy

News Editor

Note: Due to the rapidly evolving nature of this situation, some facts and figures may fall out of date in a matter of hours to days.

How many people are currently infected?

As of the time of this article over 350,000 cases have been reported worldwide, with about 35,000 in the US. However, this number is rapidly changing, and could be inaccurate due to difficulties with widespread testing in many countries. Additionally, epidemiologists have reported that up to 80% of those infected with the virus can carry it while presenting few symptoms, which reduces the accuracy of current infection counts.

How many people have died?

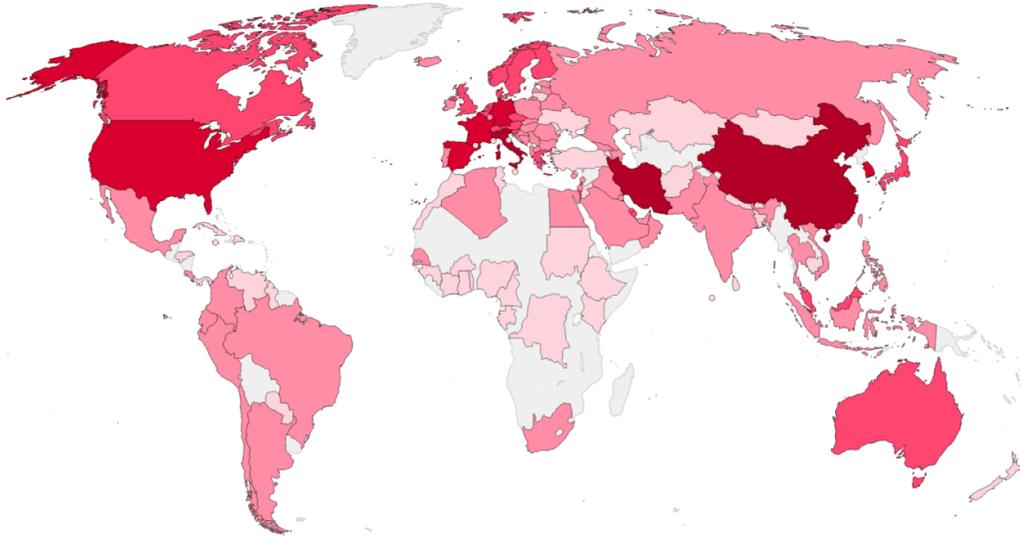
Over 15,000 people have died worldwide, with about 60 deaths in the US, the majority of which are concentrated in Washington state. The fatality rate has varied from less than 1% to over 3% in different areas, but a firm fatality rate is difficult to estimate due to varying health care and testing resources across the globe.

What states have been affected?

Cases have been reported in all 50 states. New York has been the hardest hit with over 17,000 cases, followed by Washington state with over 2,000 cases and California with over 1,800.

How has Kansas City and UMKC been affected?

According to UMKC ad-



Heat map of areas with coronavirus infections. (Bloomberg.com)

ministration, no one from the university has contracted the virus. However, 13 cases have been reported in Kansas City, along with six in Jackson county. There are 106 confirmed cases statewide and three deaths.

What if I have coronavirus? What are the symptoms?

In many people, the coronavirus presents cold or flu-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, cough, sore throat, or fever. More serious cases can lead to pneumonia or difficulty breathing, especially in children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised.

How can I protect myself from the virus?

Recommendations from the World Health Organization and the CDC include frequent hand washing of at least 20 seconds duration, coughing and sneezing into the elbow rather than the open air, avoiding touching your face, social distancing (i.e. keeping over three feet away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing, avoiding crowds and packed areas), and seeking medical help if symptoms present

themselves.

How can I be tested for the coronavirus?

Testing carries from state to state. In Missouri, public health officials recommend contacting your healthcare provider if you believe you need testing. The test can then be performed by a state or commercial lab, with results from the state lab coming within 24 hours. For more information, Missouri's coronavirus hotline is 877-435-8411.

What is the US doing to protect against the virus?

President Trump declared a national state of emergency, which allows additional resources to be freed to combat the virus. Though the federal government has faced extensive criticism for its response to the virus and the lack of available testing resources, federal agencies have announced partnerships with several companies to speed up testing and provide more resources to affected states. Additionally, President Trump announced a travel ban last week that applies to most of Europe, including Great Brit-

ain. While American nationals who have been tested for the virus will be allowed to return home, other travel for non-Americans has been restricted. The administration has also fielded the possibility that it will restrict domestic travel as well.

What is Kansas City doing to protect against the virus?

Mayor Quinton Lucas has issued a stay-at-home order for Kansas City and Johnson, Jackson and Wyandotte counties. Residents are required to stay at home except for "essential activities" (grocery shopping, trips to the bank, doctor's office, pharmacy, restaurants, etc.) or work in essential industries. Violators can be punished with a \$500 fine or up to six months in jail. The order is in effect until April 24 and will be reevaluated then.

What has UMKC done to protect against the virus?

All UM system schools (UMKC, UMSL, Missouri S&T, and MU) have all suspended in-person classes for the rest of the semester, moving exclusively to online learning. At UMKC, campus is

closing and students are required to move out of residence halls unless absolutely necessary that they must stay.

How has the economy (and my job) been affected?

Heralded by some as the beginning of a recession, the stock market has plummeted in response to the coronavirus, even reaching the "circuit breaker" that halts trading after high percentage drops in the market. Though numbers have gone up somewhat in response to stimulus from the federal government, the future status of the market is still in question. For ordinary Americans, this has led to large drops in values for investments and 401(k)s that many rely on for retirement.

On a more local level, business closings and social distancing measures have led to many to now work from home. However, some unable to do so face unemployment for an indefinite period of time, especially for jobs in the service industry that are often held by students. At UMKC, students employed in facilities that have closed, such as Swinney Rec Center, face an uncertain future. Though a measure has been fielded by the SGA to continue paying these student workers, its fate is uncertain.

Will I be compensated by the school for the drastic changes to my education?

Students who move out of the residence halls by April 3 will receive a 45% refund. Student compensation for the changes to their education or the loss of other services paid for are still being discussed.

How long will this last?

Though many cancellations extend into April and May, the timeline for this virus is, like many other factors, uncertain.

samuelbellefy@mail.umkc.edu

What's closed in Kansas City

Mason R. Dredge

Arts & Entertainment Editor

- All performances at the Kauffman Center postponed through May 10
- The Nelson Atkins Art Museum will be closed for three weeks

While all of this is certainly disheartening, it is important to remember why these events are being canceled/postponed. It is all in part of an effort

not only in Kansas City, not only in the US, but by the entire world to slow the spread of this deadly virus.

mason.robert.dredge@mail.umkc.edu

With the US now in an official state of emergency due to COVID 19 outbreak, everything from concerts to sporting events to film releases, are being put on indefinite hold.

Here's a list of all the events and places in Kansas City that have been postponed and/or canceled:

- Planet Comic Con
- Naka Con 2020 has been canceled entirely
- The Green City Market
- City of Liberty
- The Greater Kansas City Home Show
- Kansas City Fashion Week has been moved to September
- Public Libraries have suspended all events until further notice
- All events at the Arvest Theater, The Midland, Silverstein Eye Centers Arena, Lawrence Arts Center, KCRep, Hyvee Arena and those in Power and Light have been postponed



The Nelson Atkins Museum is just one of many KC landmarks shut down during the COVID 19 outbreak (visitkc)

Coronavirus disrupts spring breaks for students

Sarah Abney

Staff Writer

During spring break, you can find most college students at crowded beaches, music festivals and maybe even ski resorts. However, the coronavirus has made it difficult for many college students apprehensive of the pandemic to justify the trip.

Recently, the state of Florida has closed beaches and all nightclubs to inhibit coronavirus transmission. The closures of other hot spot vacation locations across the nation are increasing every day.

UMKC junior Reece Kane travels frequently to other countries because of his passion for photography and videography, but the virus did not spare his travel plans from disruption. Before the virus had spread, Kane planned to visit Kauai, Hawaii. Now, he plans to stay closer to home.

“We decided that we didn't want to be stranded somewhere that we couldn't get back from, so we decided to stick to mainland America and go to another lowkey spot to camp, surf and fish to stay away from crowds,” Kane said.

Kane is staying far away from social scenes, following the CDC's recommendation against gatherings of over 10 people. “You definitely won't see me at places like bars anytime soon, and I think that for those who can't stop themselves from going to the bars for a couple of weeks while this thing dies down, you may be part of the bigger problem,” Kane said.

Kane emphasized that young adults have a responsibility to help stop the spread of the virus.

“In one way or another, it impacts us all,” Kane said.

Grant Weaver, a UMKC student in his senior year, was looking forward to his last



The coronavirus pandemic has led to many closures of popular spring break locations. (The Atlantic)

year of spring break.

“As my school career is starting to come to a close, I want to take advantage of as much free time as I have before I graduate,” said Weaver.

Weaver considered risking a trip during the coronavirus outbreak. However, he was left with no choice once Breckenridge, Colorado closed the ski resort he planned to go to. After the closure, Weaver decid-

ed it was best to cancel his travel plans.

“My friends and I do take into consideration others with potentially weaker immune systems, so we have been practicing social distancing,” Weaver said.

According to health professionals, it is critical for college students to practice social distancing in order to diminish the transmission of the corona-

virus. This includes canceling treasured plans to relax and unwind in faraway places.

Hopefully next spring break, college students can travel once again. Until then, students should spend their spring break vacations at home and practice social distancing.

skaycc@mail.umkc.edu

OPINION

The case for social distancing

Lukas Kenney

Staff Writer

To unite as a country by distancing ourselves from each other seems paradoxical, but that's exactly what we must do amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

Obviously, COVID-19 (the disease caused by the current strain of coronavirus) is spread through human interaction. The simple concept of “social distancing” has been introduced to help limit personal contact, and therefore stifle the spread of the disease.

For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its website for suggestions regarding social distancing.

“Large events and mass gatherings can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States via travelers who attend these events and introduce the virus to new communities,” wrote the CDC on March 15.

“Therefore, CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States.”

President Trump took the CDC's recommendation one step further in a briefing at the White House on Monday, where he suggested that for at least the next two weeks, Americans should avoid groups of more than 10 people. Locally, Mayor of Kansas City Quinton Lucas has banned most gatherings of 10 or more in the city. Guidelines like these are the reason UMKC has canceled face-to-face coursework for the remainder of the semester. They're the reason businesses are closing and major events are being called off, like Coachella, March Madness and virtually all sporting events, even religious gatherings. The cancellations help enforce social distancing.

But beyond avoiding large, scheduled gatherings, social distancing also calls

for people to simply limit movement, stay at home whenever possible, and remain six feet from other people when an interaction is necessary. The fact that these suggestions – if adhered to – will drastically affect the day-to-day lives of every American raises an important question: what obligation do you have to follow these guidelines?

The temptation, especially for the young and healthy, is to carry on as if nothing has changed. Life feels much easier if we ignore the coronavirus chaos that has erupted all around us.

But there does exist an obligation to socially distance ourselves from one another. Social distancing is not about individual welfare but rather the welfare of the collective. We, as individuals, have an opportunity to literally save lives in the community. It's not about you, it's about those you could potentially infect, especially the elderly and immunocompromised.

There are those who claim individual action won't do much and that coronavirus will spread regardless of

how we behave. This is, to some extent, true. However, social distancing is not about stopping the virus in its tracks, it's about slowing the spread and “flattening the curve.”

The “curve” refers to the projected number of people who will contract COVID-19 over a period of time. The curve takes on different shapes depending on the virus's infection rate.

One of the major problems with a viral disease like COVID-19 is that – if left unchecked – it will spread at an exponential rate, resulting in a peak in the curve. The peak represents a large number of individuals getting infected over a short period of time. If this happens, the American health care system will exceed capacity, and those infected by the disease will be unable to receive proper treatment.

This is exactly what happened in Italy, where confirmed cases of COVID-19 doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 between March 11 and March 15. The country's health care infrastructure was overwhelmed, which, in part, contributed to Italy's unusually high COVID-19 death rate, which was reported by PBS to be over 7% or double the global average.

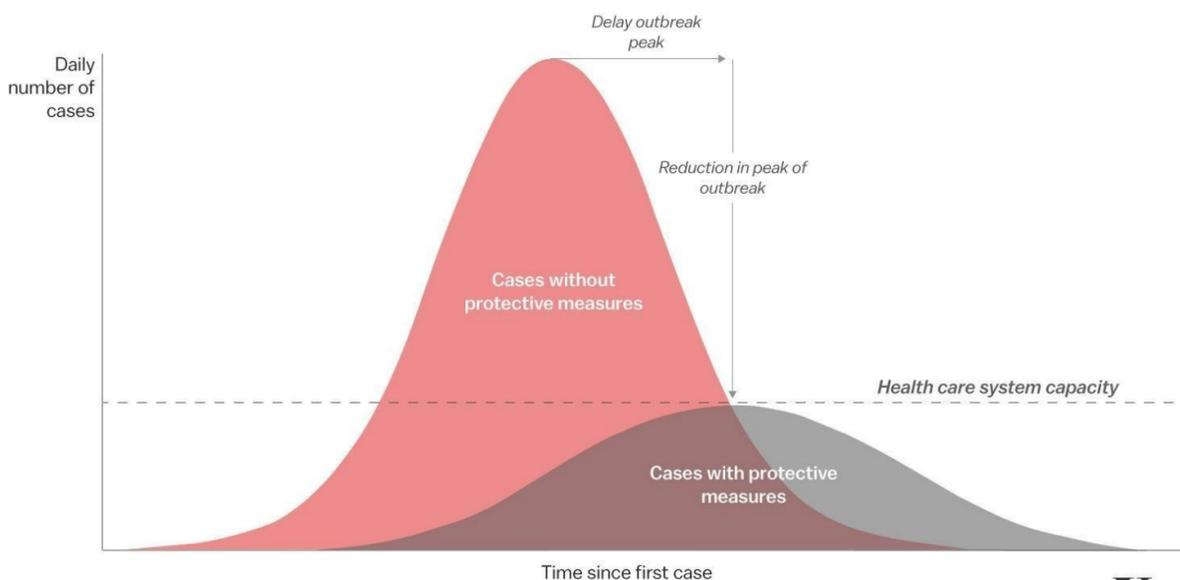
Protective measures like social distancing help prevent a peak in coronavirus infections by slowing down the rate at which people get sick. This is what's referred to as “flattening the curve.” Ideally, a flatter curve allows the healthcare system to treat infected individuals with proper care.

To carry on as if a potentially fatal disease is not spreading throughout the United States is selfish. Each and every individual can make decisions to help curb the transmission of COVID-19. And as socially responsible and morally conscious individuals, we all have an obligation to do so.

Please, practice social distancing. Don't contribute to the spread of coronavirus. Sacrifice your social outings, overlook that \$50 flight to Florida, and consider the elderly and those with higher health risks. Help flatten the curve and help save lives.

lj6f4@mail.umkc.edu

Flattening the curve



Source: CDC

(Vox)

Vox