UMKC Downtown Arts Campus
Campus Impact Study

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I. Executive Summary

The concept of a Downtown Arts Campus clearly supports UMKC’s mission and strategic goals to “advance urban engagement” and “excel in the visual and performing arts” – and provides an ideal platform for UMKC’s stated objective to “demonstrate the relationships between artistic creativity, entrepreneurial innovation and economic development.”

The foremost reason for considering a Downtown Arts Campus – from the university’s perspective -- is to provide superior educational opportunities for UMKC students, creating first-rate educational facilities within blocks of the city’s world-class performing arts venues – such as the Kauffman Center of the Performing Arts and the Todd Bolender Center for Dance and Creativity -- where students will be able to perform and forge partnerships with other fine arts professionals.

In addition to creating innovative state-of-the-art educational facilities downtown – thus helping to use an abundance of commercial real estate in and around the downtown loop – the plan also enhances recruitment of top tier students and faculty and frees up significant space on the UMKC Volker campus, which can be re-imagined to address the university’s critical need for physical expansion to accommodate significant enrollment growth.

The arts campus concept, coming at the dawn of the opening of the Kauffman Center and the Bolender Center, also aligns with concepts articulated by Benno Schmidt and James Duderstadt in the 2005 “Time To Get It Right” report. Specifically, the report urges Kansas City to “enhance UMKC’s stature as one of the top 20 universities in the arts” at a time when “the arts will be of increasing importance in attracting and keeping in Kansas City the young, talented professionals the city needs to flourish.”

Despite the compelling case for a move downtown, due diligence calls for a thorough examination of the potential impact of a Downtown Arts Campus on UMKC’s existing campuses, especially the Volker campus where the university’s performing arts and arts programs now reside.

For the purposes of this study, this exploration will consider the campus impact involved in Phase I of the proposed Downtown Arts Campus plan, which calls for moving the Conservatory of Music and Dance to a new location within five years. Phases II and III would follow in 10-year increments. For further description of the proposed phases of a Downtown Art Campus, please see the Helix/HGA feasibility study issued June 2012.

Among the key questions this campus impact study will explore are these:

- How would creating a Downtown Arts Campus affect students, faculty and staff on existing campuses, especially in regard to density of student population and the vibrancy of the overall campus experience?
- How would an arts campus change the “arts experience” on the Volker campus for non-arts students, faculty and staff and for the community who currently come here for musical and theatrical performances?
II. Effect of a Downtown Arts Campus on UMKC’s existing campuses

a. A brief history

First, it may be helpful to have a brief history of UMKC and its multiple campuses – two large, permanent campuses and one small satellite campus.

Founded in 1933 as the University of Kansas City, the campus started on what is now called the Volker Campus. The Volker Campus currently is home to 10,353 students and 2,466 faculty. In 1967, UMKC developed a second campus, Hospital Hill, which currently has 2,885 students and 1,284 faculty and staff. UMKC also currently has a satellite campus in the Northland operated in leased facilities by the School of Education, that encompasses 68 students and one staff member. (addendum 1) Total enrollment, including dual credit students, exceeds 15,000.

Interestingly, the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance only recently joined the Volker campus. Founded originally as the Conservatory of Music and Arts in 1906, the Conservatory underwent many name changes and resided at more than 20 locations over the decades. Only in 1989 did it arrive at its current home at 5228 Charlotte on the Volker Campus. The creation of a new location for the Conservatory to thrive would be consistent with the long and storied history of this prominent arts organization. (addendum 2)

For a complete look at the Conservatory’s locations from 1906 to present day, follow this link:
http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=205848485034884661951.0004bcdb7b8a6889ea247&msa=0&ll=39.08637,-94.535294&spn=0.164155,0.339203

Conclusion: The Volker campus thrived for decades before the Conservatory moved to campus -- and certainly can do so again. And the converse is also true. The Conservatory operated successfully in numerous locations before moving to Volker and has a long history of seeking locations that provide the greatest artistic and educational benefits for students and faculty.

b. Potential effects of Downtown Arts Campus on enrollment and faculty/staff.

Impact on enrollment and staffing can be viewed through at least two different lenses: arts students and their faculty/staff AND non-arts students plus related faculty and staff.

The Conservatory in 2012 serves 540 students, 470 in music and 70 in dance. They are taught by 65 full-time and 40 part-time faculty and staff. The Conservatory’s enrollment target is 620 students, a number that will provide a comprehensive education to students in its jazz, dance, vocal, instrumental, keyboard, composition, music education and music therapy programs.
These students, recruited nationally and internationally, come to the Conservatory for intensive professional education. Some have asked, what happens when you move approximately 600 students and 100 faculty/staff from the Volker campus. While some may envision it leaving a large gap on Volker, consider these facts. First, those 600 students represent less than 6 percent of the entire student population (and only 7.4 percent of undergraduates).

Secondly, the resultant space would be put to use immediately. UMKC has set a goal of growing its enrollment by 5,000 students by 2020. The anticipated growth in undergraduate enrollment is targeted to come from six academic units: School of Education, School of Management, School of Computing and Engineering, School of Biological Sciences, School of Nursing and College of Arts and Sciences. Increases in applications and admissions for FS2012 provide a strong indication that enrollment growth projections will be met.

Conclusion: Clearly, the Conservatory and UMKC can meet their enrollment goals with or without a downtown campus. But a downtown campus will enable the Conservatory to increase its ability to recruit the highest quality students and faculty and provide an extraordinary teaching environment by putting their classrooms within blocks of world-class performance venues that will become part of their student experience.

c. Impact on campus interaction with performing arts students.

So from a numerical standpoint, moving 600 students won’t dramatically affect the student population on existing campuses. But how will it affect the vibrancy and richness of student interaction with each other and the arts?

That question is a bit more complex to answer.

Let’s start in the classroom.

Based on some community conversations, it appears that many have a picture of conservatory students mingling frequently with UMKC students pursuing other majors. Violin majors mingling with engineers, opera majors sharing classes with pre-med students. The actuality is that Conservatory students -- in a practice that is typical of Conservatory students at other universities -- specialize fairly early in their academic careers and thus spend the majority of their class time with other Conservatory majors.

That reality is compounded by the fact that UMKC currently does not have a general education, or core curriculum, in place that would create a group of courses that all undergrads must complete. Such core curriculums have a tendency to bring together students from varied degree programs, creating greater contact among students of diverse academic backgrounds and pursuits. UMKC plans to implement such a curriculum soon for the benefits it offers students from all majors (see Section II, subsection d).

Without that core curriculum, many students currently take most or all of their required courses within their school, i.e., with students in majors similar to their own. For example, Conservatory Dean Peter Witte notes that more than 85% of the students at the Conservatory seek professional degrees as performers, dancers, composers, music educators, and/or music therapists. Generally, 75% of their courses
are within the major, that is, are courses offered within the Conservatory, according to the conservatory’s records.

“An education in music and dance, much like a professional education in medicine, requires hours of dedication per day in the practice room and rehearsal hall balanced with an ability to connect to communities that are increasingly diverse,” Witte said.

Now let’s move outside the classroom.

Arts and non-arts students have other chances to interact through the more than 350 annual performances offered by UMKC’s performing arts students, if non-arts students choose to take advantage of the opportunity. Although hard numbers are difficult to come by, an estimate by the Central Ticket Office, suggests that students purchase 16.5% of all tickets to fine arts events¹. In the feasibility study, it is anticipated that many performance events will continue to use the Volker Campus White Recital Hall and Spencer Theater, thus assuring continued interaction at this level.

Conclusion: With or without a downtown campus, UMKC has identified a need – and will implement a plan soon – to increase interaction among students of all majors and greater exposure to the campus’ signature programs. A downtown campus would not diminish the expected benefits.

d. Opportunities for enriched student experiences around the arts

The Downtown Arts Campus concept has generated increased momentum and enthusiasm for creating opportunities for ALL UMKC students to increase their participation in and knowledge of the arts. Just as UMKC is striving to integrate its excellence in entrepreneurial education across the curriculum, the university also would like to integrate arts appreciation across the curriculum.

In coming years, regardless of a move downtown, students in arts and non-arts majors should be seeing MORE of each other in the classroom as UMKC moves to the general education, or core, curriculum that will be required of all undergraduates. That curriculum was approved by faculty and staff in 2012. Those courses, typically taken by student in their freshman year, will be taught on the Volker campus, similar to the experience of our current health science students.

Further, UMKC is considering the creation of an "arts passport," a series of performances and gallery viewings designed specifically for UMKC undergraduates in these courses. The goal is that UMKC develop a reputation as a leader in educating the audiences of tomorrow. (addendum 3)

The performances and gallery viewings will occur on both the Volker Campus and in KC’s new arts district. For example, UMKC could schedule four performances on the Volker campus and three in the arts district (imagine select and diverse performance in the Kauffman Center, the Folly Theatre, and the historic 18th and Vine

¹ The number of student tickets purchased is calculated by using all those who do not pay full price (i.e. students are eligible for discounted pricing). In that data, students represented 2,300 tickets out of total ticket sales of 13,903. Absent in this calculation are some Conservatory events which are free to students. They show their ID and there is no tracking system.
Jazz District). Again, courses and experiences like these could provide a way for UMKC to build the audiences of tomorrow in Kansas City.

As an engaged urban university with a mission of excellence in the performing arts, UMKC is unique in being able to educate and connect next generation audiences with KC's superior concert halls, theaters, and museums. Students in general education courses would be required to attend seven events within a semester. These seven events would be the "textbook" for the course, and would be packaged as an "arts passport," according to one scenario proposed as part of the general education curriculum discussion on campus.

**Conclusion:** No matter where the Conservatory and other arts and performing arts locate, UMKC will ensure that students from all majors grow their appreciation for arts and culture through a set of experiences that will create the foundation for them to become lifelong supports of arts and culture. Since 75 percent of UMKC graduates tend to stay in the greater KC metro area, UMKC will play a crucial role in grooming future generations of arts supporters and leaders.

### III. Effects of Downtown Arts Campus on UMKC Facilities

To serve approximately 600 music students, Conservatory activities currently take place in four buildings: 1) the James C. Olson Performing Arts Center, 2) Grant Music Hall, 3) the Annex building and 4) the 5301 Charlotte Street house. The facilities in both the Olsen Center and Grant Hall are shared with the UMKC Theater Department and the Kansas City Repertory Theater (a professional repertory theater company located on campus). This list does not include additional buildings for other arts programs, scenery shops and other related needs.

The Downtown Arts Campus plan addresses the needs to improve the quality of classroom, practice and performance space, per accreditation standards. It also offers opportunities to address future academic needs from non-arts programs based on projected enrollment growth for the Volker campus.

**a. Current music and dance facilities don't meet the needs of current students, according to NASM and NASD accreditation groups.²**

Accreditation studies have noted that the current Conservatory facilities – divided among four buildings -- are inadequate to program’s needs. The performance calendar alone, with more than 350 events per year, exceeds the capacity of current venues, forcing some students to find off-campus sites to present their required recitals. Neither White Hall nor Grant Recital Hall were designed to accommodate opera, musical theater, or dance. Current space is so limited that some full-time faculty teach in practice rooms.

According to the October 2011 NASM Visitors report: “Facility issues, along with the enrollment management issues …appear to be the largest areas for improvement. The two major buildings (Olson Performing Arts Center and Grant Hall) are both shared with the Theater Department and the professional theater

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² National Association of Schools of Music Self Study Presented for consideration by the NASM Commission on Accreditation, March 15, 2011.
housed at the university. Two shared buildings several blocks apart would immediately suggest difficulties, and discussion of these issues deservedly occupied much of the visit. The two remaining smaller buildings are also at a considerable distance, and do not appear particularly well suited to their functions. It appears necessary, however, to use all four buildings if currently required operations are to function.

The report goes on: “The current practice of the majority of students performing their recitals off campus, primarily in area churches, appears to lead to problems of acoustical environment and resulting limitation in recording quality. …The instructional programs appear to be seriously compromised by the distance between the buildings. The visitors noted that it is considered normal for students to be late – sometimes quite late -- for classes because of the time required to go from building to building.”

“…The number of practice rooms does not appear adequate to the size of the student body.”

**Conclusion:** Even without a Downtown Arts Campus, UMKC’s performing arts facilities need improvements so the physical facilities match the academic quality of the programs offered here. Such improvements are crucial to UMKC’s ability to continue to provide first-rate education – and attract quality students and faculty.

**b. Downtown move could create “space” opportunities for other academic programs.**

A new arts campus would create new opportunities and potential for growth on the Volker campus. For example, student housing on Volker is currently at capacity, so the potential of some students moving downtown could actually create room for more students. For example, Grant Hall, currently the location of many of the Conservatory’s classrooms and teaching studios, could easily be repurposed to serve as general classroom. The building was formerly an elementary school. Because of the space intensive needs of performing arts programs – as you might imagine more students could fit in a dance rehearsal room repurposed as a lecture room – classrooms freed up by the move could help serve much of the enrollment growth anticipated on the Volker campus. And expansion/growth space has been in limited supply on the landlocked Volker campus. The freed-up space could be repurposed to suit many different academic programs – including providing expanded space for other arts programs on campus that won’t move downtown until later phases of the Downtown Arts Campus project.

**Conclusion:** Many academic programs on campus will be interested in proposing suitable uses for space that would become available as enrollment increases and programs move to a new Downtown Arts Campus.

**c. Performance spaces would still stay busy on the Volker campus.**

But performance space on the UMKC Volker campus would not go away. The creation of an arts campus would provide UMKC arts students with appropriate classroom, practice and rehearsal facilities in an internationally recognized arts
district. Performances would still go on in existing performance venues. White Recital Hall and the Spencer Theatre would continue to host a rich array of UMKC student performances. And existing downtown venues – such as Kauffman Performing Arts Center and Copaken Theater – would be part of that rich mix of on- and off-campus performance venues.

Many believe the opportunity for Volker students to engage in courses in the arts campus, and attend select performances in the district is an important new way UMKC can be “an engaged urban university” now and in the future.

Matters of campus vibrancy are important, and will remain a priority for UMKC’s arts units. At its core, though, a campus should serve the educational needs of all of its students. As reports from the National Association of Schools of Music and the National Association of Schools of Dance make clear, the instructional arts facilities on the Volker campus fall short of this purpose.

**Conclusion:** The proposed Downtown Arts Campus would primarily house classroom and practice room space, so all existing performance venues at UMKC and in the Greater KC metro area would continue to stay busy.

### IV. How would a Downtown Arts Campus affect transportation and housing services?

#### a. Transportation

The creation of new space downtown will change how UMKC students move from one campus to another. Certainly it could create the need for increased transportation options, which could stress existing operations, but the backbone of that transportation system is already in place.

Students currently have two bus options for transportation to the Hospital Hill campus or other metro area locations. Those include the UMKC Shuttle and the Kansas City Area Transit Association bus system.

For the bargain rate of $14 per semester, students have unlimited bus ridership. Current student use of mass transit our average daily ridership of the KCATA lines is in the 800-1,000 daily trips. More than half of those trips are on the Main Street MAX and Troost MAX lines, which serve both the current Hospital Hill campus and could be extended to a potential Downtown Arts Campus. One of the most popular destinations for student riders is a drop-off location near the KC Power and Light district, so student already use the bus service to travel downtown.

Average daily ridership on the UMKC Shuttle buses is in the 200-300 daily trips range, which is about evenly split between the Volker Campus and Hospital Hill Campus routes.

**Conclusion:** A Downtown Arts Campus likely would increase demand for public transportation, but the existing framework provides a solid foundation to build on.
b. Housing.

Current plans do not call for building university-owned and operated housing near a downtown arts campus location. But it is anticipated that some students might want to live downtown near such a campus. In Spring Semester 2012, UMKC Residential Life reported about 60 Conservatory students living in campus-operated housing. Fall Semester 2012 projections are similar.

Students may continue to live on the Volker campus as well as in off-campus housing in the area, but it is anticipated that some may want to move to housing in the downtown loop area if a Downtown Arts Campus is built. UMKC has no current plans to build any university-operated housing downtown. However, a number of market-rate housing options are available and some downtown leaders anticipate that more might be built to meet the needs of an arts campus.

Student residence halls on the Volker campus are at capacity, with current student demand exceeding availability. If Conservatory students gravitated toward downtown housing, it is anticipated that the facilities would soon be filled with other students – especially given UMKC’s planned enrollment growth.

Conclusion: A Downtown Arts Campus may create increased demand for market-rate housing downtown. If existing UMKC student residents migrate to downtown housing options, it would create opportunities for the university to fill unmet housing needs on the Volker campus without building additional residence hall space.