Administration allegedly waited four days to inform UMKC of student with COVID-19

Sam Bellefy
News Editor

According to a report by The Kansas City Star, UMKC administration allegedly knew of a law student who had the coronavirus for four days before informing the campus. The student was last on campus on March 16. With the incubation period of the virus lasting up to two weeks, students and staff alike could have been infected. SGA President Justice Horn told The Star that the university has informed the SGA that this could lead to students "inadvertently spreading the virus to others in their family or community."

The SGA, which is meeting with upper administration on the issue on April 2, has vehemently expressed its displeasure with the university’s actions in this case. "One of UMKC's greatest attributes has been its emphasis on putting students first," writes the SGA. "The revelations reported on by The Kansas City Star cast serious doubt on upper administration’s commitment to that basic tenant of our university."

UNews will continue to cover this issue in further detail.

A report by The Kansas City Star says that UKC withheld information on a student with coronavirus. (Wikimedia Commons)

UMKC implements credit/no credit grading option for spring 2020

Annie Bolin
Staff Writer

UMKC students now have the option to convert their spring semester letter grades to credit or no credit, according to a decision from Interim Provost Jenny Lundgren on Friday.

Lundgren described the change as "empowering students to choose an option that best fits their academic needs this semester" under the COVID-19 pandemic. The change comes after MU implemented a similar system last week.

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Many UMKC students have lost their jobs and applied for unemployment due to COVID-19. (Fox Business)

Many seniors are upset to see their semesters end without a chance to say goodbye to classmates and professors.

Most graduating UMKC seniors are upset or confused with their situations. Graduating seniors are concerned about their future because the recent financial burden following COVID-19. Graduating seniors feel like participation is not the same as meeting face to face twice a week.

Some seniors worry about their future after UMKC as COVID-19 interferes with events that help students network with potential employers. Seniors are disappointed they were unable to say goodbye to classmates and professors.

Staff Writer Regan Smith

Daisy Garcia Montoya

Staff Writer Sarah Abney

Staff Writer Brenden Hill

Small business owners are finding themselves turning off lights and locking their doors. Working college students are now applying for unemployment. They never saw it coming.

Melody Holliday, a UMKC senior majoring in music education, has recently lost her job due to the financial burden following COVID-19. Holliday’s workplace has decided to permanently close, unable to recover from the lack of business COVID-19 has caused.

“The staff was my second family. I actually looked forward to going to work every day,” Holliday said.

As a college student, Holliday filed for unemployment in efforts to support herself financially during this time. “I filed for unemployment about two weeks ago, but since the system is overloaded, I have yet to receive any money,” Holliday said.

“Personally, I am worried about my future because my student teaching has also been affected by the shutdowns. I hope I can find a temporary job before I go into the education field,” Holliday added.

Holliday is joined by many other UMKC students who have lost jobs due to COVID-19. “I feel really blindsided,” said UMKC political science student Jason Bell. “When I first heard about this virus I was worried about it, but I never really thought about how it would affect my job.”

Pro-law student Tedeja Dean, who lost her job due to COVID-19, has joined the millions of students who have had to apply for unemployment. “I never imagined I’d be filing for unemployment at 21 years old, but I guess here I am,” said Dean.

This growing number of people applying for unemployment is something that UMKC economics professor Erik Ohsun says isn’t a surprise. “Before all of this, the job numbers were pretty solid, but while we are still getting updates on information, it is pretty stark,” he said.

COVID-19 continues to pose a threat to our health and the economy, and these students are joined by even more like them who have been hit with the brunt of this pandemic’s economic hardships.

Sarah Abney

Staff Writer

Brenden Hill

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Staff Writer

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Staff Writer
From KC to LA
Filmmaker Morgan Cooper makes a name for himself

Adeta Chareunsab
Staff Writer

From having conversations with celebrities like filmmaker Ava DuVernay to actor Will Smith, you could say Kansas City filmmaker Morgan Cooper has made it in life. Cooper was only 18 when his love for filmmaking started after buying his first camera. Before working on his craft, Cooper spent most of his high school career teaching himself music production, and he took the same approach for filmmaking, spending many hours in his basement learning how to work the camera and improve his skills.

“What that takes to become great at anything,” Cooper said. “You have to immerse yourself in it. It has to really become a lifestyle.”

Just like other filmmakers in Kansas City, Cooper had to take small steps and film whatever he could, such as events, sports, and even music videos. As Cooper got more practice with the camera, he was able to develop his own style, which led to his work gaining more attention from the filmmaking community. He was making short films and sky-rockets during the release of his fanned trailer, “BEL-AIR,” which paradies Will Smith’s sitcom, “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” and twists it into a dark drama. The trailer also gained the attention of the fresh prince himself, which led the two to meet each other in Miami, Florida. “He was just so warm and everything you can think about Will is true and more,” Cooper said. “He’s a brilliant storyteller and is extremely passionate about it. We hit it off right away, and I can’t say enough about him.”

Cooper also got the chance to speak to Ava DuVernay, director of the 2019 Netflix film “When They See Us.” “BEL-AIR” gained her attention, and just like Smith, DuVernay also gave Cooper some helpful advice he still takes to heart to this day. “The fact that she took the time to talk to me really said a lot about who she is, and it really meant a lot to me,” Cooper said. “Although it’s been almost a year since Cooper made his big move to Los Angeles to help grow his career, he still has a lot of love for his hometown. Scenes from “BEL-AIR” and his film “U SHOOT VIDE-0S” feature locations from Kansas City. Some of Cooper’s favorite spots to film at are the West Bottoms and The Scout situated at Blue Valley Park. Cooper is also fond of the filmmaking community here, saying everyone is willing to help each other out.

“The greatest thing about the Kansas City filmmaking community is that there’s always something going on,” Cooper said. “There are a lot of nice people who are willing to help you and be supportive of the fact that you’re reaching out and trying to learn.”

While Cooper has a lot of love for the community and slow-paced lifestyle Kansas City offers, he also enjoys working and honing his craft in fast-paced Los Angeles.

“You’ve got to bloom where you’re planted right now,” Cooper said. “This is where the next phase of my career is blooming.”

For the rest of 2020, Cooper plans on working on his first major TV production, “Black Coffee,” with actress Gabrielle Union and Sony Pictures TV. He is also writing two features and is working on producing a show with Universal Studios.

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Coronavirus—the entertainment industry’s worst nightmare

Adeta Chareunsab
Staff Writer

From delayed movie releases to canceled concert tours, the coronavirus has taken over the entertainment industry. The pandemic has swept across the U.S., becoming the biggest threat to the rising concerns of the coronavirus.

Just like most filmmakers and performers, Cooper has found that in 2020, they are unable to go out and do what they love. Artists have shut down to help slow the spread of the virus. On the musical side of the entertainment industry, tours and music festivals have been canceled left and right due to the spread of the virus. Although quarantining ourselves at home and physically distancing ourselves from the ones we love might not be the most ideal way to spend our sudden free time, there are a variety of entertaining ways to make our time alone seem less suffering.

For the film nerds wanting to get some popcorn and watch the newest movies, Universal Studios announced it will be releasing their current films online.

You can now stream movies like “The Invisible Man” and “The Hunt” at the rental price of $19.99 for a 48-hour period. And for the Disney fans out there, Disney has released “Frozen II” three months earlier than originally planned. If you have any movie streaming service, there’s a good chance you have some binge-watching opportunities. And for those of you who already have post-concert depression from the concert you get to go to, musical artists have started a new trend of performing virtual concerts.

Just like everyone else, celebrities also have to quarantine themselves at home and find a way to entertain themselves out of boredom. Artists have joined together in a movement called “TogetherAtHome,” where they have their own in-home concerts live-streamed on various media platforms. Singer John Legend was one of the first few artists to have a show every week.

“A lot of musicians and artists and entertainers are unable to go out and do the thing that we do best, which is perform live at venues with lots of people,” Legend told The Associated Press after his live stream. “So we’re trying to find ways to stay in touch with people and give them some love.”

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Celebrating Women in STEM: Vanessa Galvez

Madalyn Weston
Staff Writer

Hurricanes are one of the most feared natural disasters. Though rated by wind power, hurricane waters are far more dangerous. According to the National Hurricane Center, 88% of hurricane-related deaths in the U.S. are caused by storm surges, flooding and other water-related issues. Around the world, engineers are working to control the flow of water during storms. In New York City, one of the engineers focusing on stormwater mitigation is Vanessa Galvez.

Galvez grew up in Queens, New York, the daughter of Salvadorian immigrants. Like most future engineers, as a child, Galvez enjoyed taking things apart to see how they worked. In 2008, she completed high school at Thomas Edison Vocational and Technical High School in Jamaica, Queens, with a special focus on AutoCAD and Technical Drawing. She became interested in Civil Engineering after watching a documentary about levee failures in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Poor structure design by the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers in 2005 led to 80% of New Orleans flooding, damaging over 100,000 homes and businesses.

Galvez was the first generation of her family to go to college, attending the New York University Tandon School of Engineering in Brooklyn. She worked as a teaching assistant for her department, overseeing a lab and assisting other students with a robotics project. She was also a research assistant developing lightweight concrete samples for future construction projects. She participated in the Concrete Canoe Competition, the American Society for Civil Engineers and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering in 2012.

Galvez joined the New York City Department of Design and Construction as a resident engineer. The same day, Hurricane Sandy smashed into New York City, killing 44 residents and doing about $19 billion in damage in a 48-hour period. Following the devastation, New York City invested in protections for its most at-risk areas. In 2016, at the age of just 26, Galvez led the $3.8 million construction of 164 bioswales in the Maspeth, Queens area. Bioswales are green patches in urban areas, packed with extremely absorbent soil and specially-selected plants to drink up any runaway rainwater. Bioswales protect city sewer systems from being overwhelmed during storms and reduce the risk of flooded streets. Galvez’s specular management earned her a page in the book “Everyday Superheroes: Women in STEM Careers,” by Erin Twamley.

In 2018, Galvez left the NYC Department of Design and Construction to work as an associate project manager for New York City Transit. Last year, she accepted a position as an office engineer at Jacobs, a Civil Engineering firm focused on sustainability and inclusion. She’s currently working on a pedestrian bridge project in the Bronx.

Are you interested in empowering women in the STEM fields? The Women in Science (WiSci) group wants you! Email President Emily Larner (emily.larner@mail.umkc.edu) for more information.

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Vanessa Galvez works as an engineer to mitigate stormwater damage in NYC (NYC.gov)