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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Missouri-Kansas City and the UMKC Hispanic Advisory Board strengthen commitment to Hispanic community

Memorandum of Understanding provides cooperative framework to fulfill UMKC's urban mission.

Kansas City, Mo. - Leo E. Morton, chancellor, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Alfonso J. Zárate, chair, University of Missouri-Kansas City Chancellor's Hispanic Advisory Board (Board) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes a foundation of expectations and offers a tangible means for addressing racially-centered issues of concern within UMKC. The signing took place at The Guadalupe Center, 1015 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez, Kansas City, Mo. The center's number is (816) 421-1015.

This MOU, similar to one signed with the Kansas City Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in April 2007, is the result of concerns expressed during discussions between UMKC representatives – including Chancellor Morton – and representatives of both internal and external stakeholders from the Hispanic community.

The purpose of the MOU is to provide a cooperative framework for renewed commitment and partnership between UMKC and the Board that "empowers the Hispanic community to attain educational excellence and to contribute positively to the fulfillment of the mission of UMKC." The MOU focuses on a number of strategies, including increasing recruitment/admission of and financial assistance for students from underrepresented minority groups; increasing numbers of minority faculty and staff; and increasing efforts toward recruitment, retention, promotion and award of tenure of underrepresented minority faculty and staff.

"I am pleased about the commitment UMKC is making to enhance the educational opportunities for Hispanic students," said Zárate. "As chairman of the Hispanic Advisory Board, I want to emphasize that the MOU is only the first of many steps at addressing issues that often times impede the lifelong educational opportunities and progress of minority groups. We must continue efforts to dialogue and make a commitment as a community, parents, students, faculty and institutions to the fulfillment of this document."

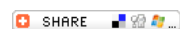
"This MOU is a critical step in providing greater opportunity for students and achieving academic distinction through the ongoing collaboration with our urban community," said Chancellor Morton. "The success of our university and the success of Kansas City are undeniably connected, and I am grateful to the leaders of the UMKC Hispanic Advisory Board for their commitment to helping UMKC achieve excellence." The UMKC Hispanic Advisory Board was formed in February 2006.

For several years, UMKC has worked with the Hispanic community on numerous Hispanic-focused programs, including a partnership through UMKC's [Admissions Office](#) and the [Mattie Rhodes Center](#) to assist, mentor and educate the Northeast Latino community about the college process, early college preparation, scholarship opportunities, ACT preparation and community resources. Since 2004, UMKC has participated through financial support and volunteerism in the [BizFest](#) competition. The competition, designed by the [United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#) and hosted by the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Collaborative and the [Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City](#), teaches Hispanic students a variety of business techniques and develops entrepreneurial and leadership skills. The [UMKC School of Nursing's](#) "Familias en Acción" (Families in Action) project – through a partnership with Alta Vista High School and grant support from the National Institutes of Health – provides a multi-level intervention program designed to decrease violence among Hispanic youth by increasing self-esteem, showing respect for others and expressing pride in their culture and their community. Also, in 2008, a breakfast for the Agapito Mendoza Scholarship increased fundraising in partnership with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation, raising a total of \$15,000 for tuition, books or housing. The Memorandum of Understanding will be available at www.umkc.edu/chancellor/ode on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), one of four University of Missouri campuses, is a public university serving more than 14,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. UMKC engages with the community and economy based on a four-part mission: life and health sciences; visual and performing arts; urban issues and education; and a vibrant learning and campus life experience.

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