

UMKC New Student Convocation
Sunday, August 21, 2011

Jay Devineni, SGA President

It is an honor to be here today. I was sitting where you are today when I was in my first year at UMKC -- feeling anxious, and excited about what the college experience is. One of the first things I did was get involved on campus by joining a fraternity, and that involvement has led to many opportunities on campus. I would encourage you to be active on campus.

UMKC has over 175 student organizations that range from social groups like Fraternity and Sororities or Dance Dance Revolution Club, to cultural groups like Queer Alliance or Indian Student Association, and to educational groups like the Pre-Dental Society or Economics Club.

Student Government Association represents every student and student organization on campus through the Senate, student activity fee committee, and superior court. To get your money's worth in college being involved is the key. It's also the key to successful networking, growing as a person and creating lifelong friendships.

Some advice for a new Roo like you: Get to know your professors and classmates and please schedule time to study and go out.

I wish you the best.

I'd like to take a moment to speak about what makes UMKC the special university it is. As you entered the building today, you heard bagpipes being played. Bagpipes have a special meaning for our university. The playing of bagpipes also takes place at graduation when the graduates walk into the ceremony. The tradition stems from the old Scottish rite of playing bagpipes during special events like the birth of a child or a wedding. As graduation marks entry into a new stage of life, so does today. Today represents your first official day as a UMKC student.

Another unique tradition at UMKC is our mascot, the kangaroo. UMKC is one of only two universities in the United States that uses kangaroo as its nickname and only one of three that uses a kangaroo as its mascot.

The Kangaroo was first brought up in 1936 when the editors of the University newspaper, then named Kansas City University, decided it was time to find a mascot for the debate team. There were no organized University athletic teams at the time, yet the students on the newspaper staff still wanted a unique identity for their debate team and, more importantly, their school.

Soon after, the University News suggested a contest for a school song rhyming kangaroo with KCU. The first known drawing of the kangaroo appeared on the cover of the November 1937 issue of a KCU humor magazine. It was followed six months later by another cover showing Mickey Mouse and the kangaroo. The artist for this second kangaroo cover was Walt Disney. During the spring 1987 campus elections, an overwhelming majority of students voted to retain the kangaroo as the UMKC mascot.

The colors of the University of Missouri-Kansas City were determined in March 1934 by a student council decree, which cited the school colors as “old gold and royal blue.” Blue is a symbol for trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith and truth. Yellow represents honor and loyalty.

On June 9, 1936, Duncan Spaeth, president-elect, gave the first commencement address to an audience that included 80 graduates. Since that time, our campus has continued to grow and become the exciting, vibrant community we see today.

Now that you have learned about many of our campus traditions and history it is time to officially introduce you as the incoming class of 2011. The Pinning Ceremony is a tradition at UMKC that symbolizes your induction as a member of the UMKC community.

As you arrived you were given a UMKC pin ---please find it and take it out.

This pin is a symbol of your investment in UMKC, in yourself, and to the world.

There is no going back to what you were before; whether you have been on campus for a few days or a few hours, you are changed and will continue to grow and develop as an individual and a member of the global community.

The meaning of this pin may change over time. Today it represents a beginning, a celebration and a commitment. Our hope is that 5, 10 or 20 years from now it will represent achievement, pride in your alma mater, and involvement as an alumnus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Please stand and fasten your pin to the collars of your UMKC tee-shirts.

In closing the Pinning Ceremony, please remain standing and recite the following:

*We, the incoming class of 2011
mark the beginning of our college life
by accepting with pride this UMKC Pin
as a symbol of our commitment
to gaining the universe of knowledge
in a city of opportunity.*

A final but very important piece of our traditions is our alma mater and fight song. The alma mater was written by brothers Vincent and Edwin Robbins and Bill Hathaway. It was first introduced to the Men's Glee Club in 1940. You will now have the chance to learn our alma

mater – whose words are on the overhead screen -- so that you are ready for your first UMKC Roos athletic event!

Our alma mater will be sung today by UMKC student, Paul Griggsby.

Please stand while we sing the UMKC Roos Alma mater and fight song.