



February 23, 2026

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, I write to express our strong support for Kansas City University's proposal to replace Smith Hall with a new, state-of-the-art research and health sciences facility on its Historic Northeast campus.

For more than a century, KCU has served as a steadfast anchor institution in Kansas City's Historic Northeast. Through sustained investment, community partnership, and an unwavering commitment to advancing health, the University has strengthened both its neighborhood and our broader regional economy. Even during challenging economic periods, KCU remained, reinvested, and expanded its impact.

KCU's planned replacement of Smith Hall, an aging and obsolete facility, represents the next chapter in that commitment. The proposed research lab will advance population health, expand community-based programming, and enhance Kansas City's reputation as a hub for health sciences education and innovation.

Importantly, this project will also deliver substantial economic benefits. **The total employment impact associated with constructing the new research facility (including direct on-site labor, indirect roles such as architects and manufacturers, and jobs supported by worker spending) is conservatively estimated at between 420 and 630 jobs.** These are quality jobs that will support families, strengthen local businesses, and generate additional economic activity throughout the city.

This project directly aligns with the KC Chamber's 2026 KCMO Legislative Policy Agenda, particularly in the areas of:

- **Job Creation** – Attracting and supporting quality jobs for residents of all education levels and advancing prosperity for all.
- **Inclusive, Prosperous Development** – Encouraging growth-oriented development that builds on Kansas City's competitive advantages and advances opportunity in distressed neighborhoods.
- **Support for Growth and Development** – Streamlining regulatory and permitting processes to enhance business and real estate development.
- **Public Investments** – Supporting responsible, data-informed investments in infrastructure and public facilities that strengthen our city's long-term fiscal health.

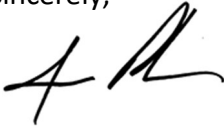
By modernizing its facilities, KCU will not only expand academic and research capacity but also deepen its community-facing work - supporting essential physical and mental health screenings, reducing barriers to care, and partnering with neighborhood organizations to improve outcomes for families. This commitment reflects our shared goal of improving healthcare access and closing opportunity gaps across Kansas City.

The Chamber also appreciates KCU's recognition of the site's history, including its commitment to preserving items of historic significance such as the clock tower, ensuring that progress honors the past.

Kansas City has a unique opportunity to reinforce its position as a center for health sciences excellence while catalyzing meaningful economic growth in the Historic Northeast. We respectfully urge you to support KCU's plan to replace Smith Hall with a cutting-edge research facility that will create jobs, strengthen community health, and contribute to the city's long-term prosperity.

Thank you for your leadership and your thoughtful consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR', written in a cursive style.

Joe Reardon
President and CEO