

Colleges' personal appeal

Daily Breeze Editorial

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Leaders reach out to black churches around Los Angeles.

In honor of Black History Month, leaders in the California State University and con college systems fanned out on Sunday to speak at 22 African-American churches in Angeles County, including the City of Refuge megachurch in the Gardena area. The message was simple enough: Make sure your future includes college.

It's good to see university presidents, such as Cal State Northridge's Jolene Koester, spoke at City of Refuge, making personal appeals and offering inspirational messag such venues. According to a recent University of Pennsylvania study, black men toc comprise only 4.3percent of students attending U.S. colleges and universities. That's same percentage as attended in 1976, suggesting that little progress in has been mad past three decades toward increasing their participation rate.

Meanwhile, college attendance is rising among many ethnic minorities including yo black women, but among young black men it's another story.

Some of the key areas university leaders stress in their outreach efforts are the basic as the need to prepare early for college. Middle-school-age children and their famili should be asking school counselors which courses are essential for college-bound st

Good study skills are also essential. So is taking the 11th-grade assessment test desi show prospective CSU students if they need

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additional preparation in areas such as math, English or writing in order to attend co

Applying early to specific college campuses and for financial aid is another key step way to being accepted into the world of higher education. The Web site www.csumentor.edu explains the process in detail.

We all know by now the hurdles that students from some minority communities faci include a higher incidence of broken families, substance abuse and feelings of alien; Changing attitudes and mind-sets may be the biggest challenge, but more mentoring services and a greater variety of college-preparatory courses at lower-performing hi;

schools are certainly part of the answer.

And so too is the personal approach that Koester and other university presidents bro
L.A.-area churches. Let's hope that the seeds of ideas they planted will be nurtured i
years to come.