

# GETTING TASTE OF CAMPUS LIFE

## Black students urged to embrace higher education

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There was something special going on this weekend at UC Santa Cruz. Nearly two-dozen black high school seniors from Santa Cruz County got a sneak peek at the university and some advice on their futures, capping a two-day retreat.

**SANTA CRUZ**

"Look within, and ask yourselves what you can do to better yourselves," Michael Watkins, superintendent of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, told the students Sunday. "Ask yourselves what your next step is going to be, and try to be successful."

The African Heritage Youth Retreat at Cowell College was designed to be fun and informative. It was put on by the university's Educational Partnership Center and the Second Saturday Network, a pair of nonprofits that decided earlier this year to work in concert in an attempt to improve the lives of the underprivileged in Santa Cruz.

Key black leaders from Santa Cruz were on hand, including Karen Edmonds, Santa Cruz High School principal; Madlyn Norman-Terrance, who's been organizing the retreat for years; and Felicia McGinty, vice chancellor of student affairs at the university.

At a Sunday luncheon, students celebrated the end of the retreat and feasted on some of Norman-Terrance's cooking, including sweet potatoes, corn, Jamaican jerk chicken, red beans and greens.

"This is a part of your ancestry," she said of the food moments before the students dug in.

The university has made major inroads recruiting minorities, said Michelle Whittingham, associate vice



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Santa Cruz County high-schoolers attend an afternoon session of the African Heritage Youth Retreat at Cowell College at UC Santa Cruz on Sunday.

chancellor for enrollment management in the student affairs division.

Nearly 51 percent of the students at UC Santa Cruz, for example, are minorities, she said, with 25 percent Asian and 26 percent mostly Latinos and blacks.

The university is hoping that some of the students from this weekend's retreat will join the ranks and apply to the school, which was the purpose of the weekend get-together.

The high-schoolers got a taste of college life. They watched movies, played games and spend the night on campus just like college students; they also hunkered down, rolled up

their sleeves and took notes on what it takes to get into a four-year university like UC Santa Cruz.

"What I learned most is that I've got to seize the moment," said Nicole Brown, a Santa Cruz High School senior. "If an opportunity rises, we should jump at it, because it might not come around again."

Moses Massenburg, 20, a UCSC student from South Central, Los Angeles, said he'd like to see more blacks attend the university.

"It be nice to have more black males," said Massenburg, a sociology major. "That way, maybe we could get a fraternity going. But right now, even if I wanted to, I couldn't start one."

He said the ratio at UC Santa Cruz is roughly three black women to every black male, and he's not sure why.

Raised by a father who was a writer and a mother who was a beautician, Massenburg said there's no doubt in his mind higher education helps in the real world.

"When I go back home to Los Angeles, people from the neighborhood are impressed," she said. "They really respect you for trying to get an education. They look at you differently."

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