



The Council of Presidents pose with students from KIPP Preparatory High School. The Council traveled to the school to speak about the importance of attending college. Photo courtesy of Robert Canida

OMMA's Council of Presidents offers collegiate experience

By Hannah Simpson
Around the Town Editor

The Council of Presidents, representing individual organizations within the Office of Multicultural and Minority Affairs (OMMA), traveled Oct. 16 to KIPP Gaston College Preparatory and Pride High School in Gaston County to speak to students about the importance of attending college.

The representatives included NAACP President Joshua "JT" Batchelor, National Council for Negro Women President Carrine Francois, NCNW Fundraising Chair Rakesha Johnson, Asian Student Association President Naly Yang and 10% Society President Jamel Porter.

The group described their personal collegiate experiences to the students.

"KIPP is a 95 percent African American population, so I wanted to address the importance taking the extra mile in higher education," Batchelor said.

Batchelor told the students it is important for them to be responsible and to recognize when to ask for help.

"The main thing I tried to convey to the students was that 'you're not

alone,'" Batchelor said. "A lot of students come into college trying to be too independent, which in return leads to failure."

Students were able to ask about their concerns, such as failure, budgeting and class time.

"Opening your mind up to new people, new cultures and new things is part of the growing process," Yang told students.

Porter said several students approached him about starting a gay/straight alliance organization at school. It is unofficially being established, Porter added.

The Council was able to attend some of KIPP's unique classes, which included gospel choir and salsa dancing.

Robert Canida, director of OMMA, received an email from the school asking him to come speak with the class about attending UNCP.

Canida later learned that UNCP was the first university to send student representatives instead of an admissions officer.

KIPP Preparatory is the sixth highest performing school in NC. Pride High School opened in 2005 and will have its first graduating class in 2008.