Black College Students' Problems Not Met

By HOLLY ABINGTON

Most of the problems black students face in college occur because of their basic human needs are not met, Dr. Alfred Pasteur told a group of USL faculty members Tuesday.

Pasteur, co-author of "Roots of Soul" and professor of counseling at Hunter College of the City University of New York, spoke of the problems faced by black students in predominantly white universities.

"In our culture, not everyone has an equal chance," Pasteur explained. "When you're dealing with any group in society that has been put down - like blacks - who have a difficult time feeling good, it's difficult to learn."

In order to learn, according to the speaker, basic physical needs, safety needs and the needs for love and self-esteem must first be filled.

"Physical needs - food, clothing, and shelter - are met by money," he said, "but 33 percent of black people are poor and one-half of black children live below the poverty level."

Pasteur said that in many cases when black children score significantly lower than white children on standardized tests, statistics indicate that the black families' incomes were less than half of the white families' incomes.

"Test scores and income go hand in hand," he said.

Another need, that of safety, is often not met in homes where the father is absent, he continued. "In the black community today, 79 percent of black babies are born in homes where there are no fathers."

Pasteur believes that for blacks the needs for love and self-esteem are ignored. "None of society's institutions suggest that blacks are worth something."

"In institutions like television, our finest black actors play clown roles, like George Jefferson," he said. "Because they are black, they are expected to play these roles."

Cultural characteristics of blacks such as language and speech patterns, may contribute to their educational problems, he pointed out. "These characteristics that are sometimes mistaken for defiance are actually things peculiar to the culture," he said.

Teachers can best deal with these problems by being sensitive to the needs of black students and aware of their cultural differences, he suggested.

In the future, Pasteur predicted, because of technology, manual laborers will be needed and workers will have to be highly educated.

"Universities must understand their role in these changes and make education accessible and possible for everyone," he said.