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Brother Raymond Fitz and 36 College Presidents Appeal Their Colleagues

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College prexys issue appeal for reforms

Upgrade teaching quality, colleagues told

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brother Raymond Fitz of the University of Dayton joined 36 other college presidents today in an appeal to their colleagues to champion school reform and set an example by improving the quality of teaching on their own campuses.

In an open letter to the presidents of all 3,300 U.S. colleges and universities, they said the need for a better educated work force has created "a national emergency" for the schools.

"Our future as a nation depends ... upon the quality of what and how we teach our children," said the group led by Stanford University President Donald Kennedy.

The problems of elementary and higher education are "deeply intertwined," it said, and require the college presidents to "act together as persistent and passionate advocates for reform."

Colleges must "address our own shortcomings" as well as reach out to their local schools and communities, it said.

Universities have long been accused of valuing research over teaching. A book attacking the quality of undergraduate education, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, became a surprise best-seller this spring.

The presidents' open letter states:



Brother Raymond Fitz

"Only if we are seriously committed to the improvement of teaching in our own houses can we speak convincingly about the importance of high quality teaching in the schools."

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"Teaching is the first business of our universities, just as it is the first business of the primary and secondary schools," it said.

It exhorted college presidents to form partnerships with local schools, and support efforts to make teaching "a true profession ... on an intellectual, social and economic par with the professional career alternatives currently available to our best students."

Colleges should invest more in departments and schools of education to make them first-rate, and bolster instruction in the arts and sciences where future teachers take most of their courses, the letter said.

It said the colleges should "undertake a new commitment to bring more minorities into teaching."

If present trends continue, it said, minorities soon will comprise a third of the pupils in U.S. schools and only 5 percent of the teaching force.

It said college presidents should "make our own commitment to minority advancement as visible as possible," through faculty recruiting and increased student aid.

It also recommended working with community colleges, where most minority college students are educated, "to move more of these students into four-year institutions and especially into teaching."

The letter grew out of a conference Kennedy organized earlier this month at the Spring Hill Conference Center near Minneapolis.