June 14, 2016

Dear NCORE Community,

We are writing this letter to acknowledge, honor and give light to the anger, rage, pain, devastation and mourning that we have all experienced at the violation of a beloved community of siblings who were brutally murdered at the very place in which they found refuge, solidarity and a freedom.

We are living in a moment where we have politicians and public figures vilifying and promoting exclusion, discrimination and hate against LGBTQ individuals and communities and communities of color. The mass murder of 49 heartbreakingly young brown and black LGBTQ individuals and other individuals in a celebratory safe place of sanctuary is unimaginable yet the historical exclusion and daily brutality that many LGBTQ people face makes it not so hard to believe. Excluded in most of the media coverage are the racial and ethnic dimensions of identities and the brutal loss of such a large number of Queer Latinx people struck down by hate in the prime of their lives and the tremendous loss and grief of their families, friends, coworkers and classmates. Many were college students, and leaders from where they were at in their careers and in their civic life. They were parents, children, siblings, partners, friends and colleagues.

As we do our work at NCORE and bring the knowledge and tools that we carry from our national conference to our home institutions and organizations we must remember that our lives are intersectional as well as our identities not just for the sake of inclusion but for actual systemic justice. The work of systemic social justice on race, ethnicity and sovereignty requires us to address intersecting systems of exclusion simultaneously—to demand change on structures, policies and practices. It is incumbent upon us to become the ideals and values that drive our work.

For our NCORE community this means not only the practice of alliance building, kindness, and caretaking but also the everyday mundane tasks of pushing on leaders, policies, curriculum, and practices for wholesale transformational change in our higher education institutions.

Our NCORE staff and leadership stand in solidarity with those who were mass murdered at the Pulse club in Orlando and in solidarity with LGBTQ communities, particularly those who are QTPOC.

We will work in earnest to provide programming that examines policies, practices, leadership and curriculum that include rather than exclude Queer & Trans People of Color who are students, faculty and staff in our institutions of higher education.

Please be safe, stay strong, take care and lead on. Our institutions need your work and voice as do our communities.

We feel blessed to work with you but heartbroken in the work.