

## LETTER FROM INTERIM DIRECTOR ROSE BORUNDA

Today, as I sit down to write this address, I reflect on the recent atrocities that took place in Gilroy, El Paso, and Dayton. This is also the day that I learned of the passing of Toni Morrison, a Nobel Prize winner in Literature. She, a woman of color, ensured that the central characters in her books were always people of color. She used the power of her pen to provide centrality to experiences and realities that deserve the printed word. She left the following for us to consider: "As you enter positions of trust and power, dream a little before you think."

As a woman of color and the daughter of immigrants, I must recognize what comes with my position of power and privilege and the trust that I must foster with communities still disproportionately unrepresented in Ivory Tower hallways. I see it as my duty to open doors to the possibilities of higher education for others. This intention is not necessarily because it is in my job description or out of any extrinsic acknowledgement that may come with this daily intention. Instead, it is my promise to all those who came before me that their sacrifices were not in vain. This covenant to an ideology that we are here to serve and lift others comes from generations of collectivist cultures who have survived conquest, colonization, enslavement, and genocide. They dreamt of a day in which life would be better. We are strong and resilient people who will overcome and lift one another past the atrocities.

In today's reality, the commitment to lifting students of color and engaging our Euro-American brothers and sisters into the collective fold means that we create a culture of "us" that reflects **all of us** rather than an "us" vs. "them." This will not come to pass, however, if we endeavor to secure our degrees as though they were a terminal destination. Instead, the goal is for each of us to accept the responsibility that comes with actively promoting and fostering integration at all levels and all spaces. In this way, this nation will slowly overcome institutionalized policies, practices, and beliefs that were structurally created to maintain inequities. In this way, we may come to dream, think, and act in ways to lift one another to a reality in which people of color are not feared, hated, or scapegoated.

Each of us can ask ourselves, "What dream can I envision that brings more beauty to this world?" In our positions of trust and power, those of us who have attained our terminal degrees may consider an emphasis on mentoring the next generation so that when our days have ended, we have fulfilled the dreams of generations before us who envisioned peace, unity, and harmony. This we can achieve, not only in our dreams and in our thoughts, but through our active intentions.

Sincerely,

Rose Borunda, Ed.D.  
Interim Director, Doctorate in Educational Leadership  
College of Education  
California State University, Sacramento