



January 20, 2021

Mark Rasdorf, MA, NCC  
Senior Associate Director for the Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center  
Main Campus Student Center, Suite 209  
501 E. Tenth Street, Mailstop 182  
East Carolina University

Dear Mark,

It is my great pleasure to share this letter of congratulations on behalf of the Campaign for Southern Equality to mark the 10th anniversary of the Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center at East Carolina University.

What a joy it was to celebrate in person with you at last year's gala and then to host Jessica and a group of students from the Center over your Spring Break, just days before the world shut down in response to COVID-19. The conversations with student leaders from the Peel Center that day were inspiring, moving, and real. They made a deep impression, just as my visit did last year.

You should know that I tell the story of what is happening at the Peel Center as often as I can. And when I tell this story, people lean in to listen – they want to know more.

The Center offers such an inspiring and important model of what is possible in the South when a public institution fulfills the promise of treating each person with dignity and respect. To do so is courageous, given the world we live in. But you also show us that when we open our doors wide and invite everyone to the table, joy, love and laughter soon fill a house. Indeed it was joy that I felt when I joined you last winter, and joy – and pride - that I felt as student leaders gave me a tour of the Center and talked about their work there and what it means in their lives.

I am also so inspired by the caliber of work happening at the Center, from receiving more than 7,000 visitors each year to nurturing the leadership of student leaders to engaging around racial justice issues to the critical work you are doing to support K-12 schools in Eastern North Carolina become more affirming of LGBTQ students. These are game-changing – and life-changing – endeavors. You are pacesetters not just for the UNC system but for higher education institutions across the South.

We send our congratulations, our appreciation for the important work you do, and our love and friendship across the miles. May we meet again soon.

With appreciation,

Rev. Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Executive Director