

**Veronica T. Watson, Convener, The Frederick Douglass Institute Collaborative  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

Veronica T. Watson, Ph.D., is Professor of English and Convener for The Frederick Douglass Institute Collaborative (FDI Collaborative) of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. In this statewide position, which she has held since 2010, she works closely with the Chancellor's office and the 14 directors of FDI Collaborative to engage low income, first generation, and historically underrepresented minority students in high impact, transformative educational opportunities. Under her leadership a system-wide Douglass Debate Society has been launched, a partnership with the National Alliance of Faith and Justice has been initiated, and a national campaign to connect students and faculty of color in conversations about careers in the professoriate—entitled the Inclusive Future Faculty Initiative—will be launched by fall 2016.

As the current Director of the Frederick Douglass Institute for Intercultural Research (FDIIR) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), Dr. Watson leads a group of faculty in supporting equity and diversity in the Academic Division of the university. Faculty associates in the FDIIR established a new faculty mentoring program that matches newly hired faculty of color and women faculty with non-departmental faculty mentors to support their professional development and transition to the university. The FDIIR also supports the success of students of color through two programs that it offers, the Douglass Debate Team (which competes as part of the system-wide Douglass Debate Society) and the Douglass Research Academy. The FDIIR is currently researching the impact that participation in the Douglass Research Academy has on the understandings of research and professional aspirations of student participants.

Dr. Watson has also served as Dean's Associate for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at IUP (2003-2007). In that position she was responsible implementing the academic vision of the college dean, including monitoring and reporting student progress and success, supporting faculty and student research through the management of special project and independent study budgets of approximately \$60,000 annually, and developing the college strategic plan and preparing the college for a Middle States review. Additionally, she spearheaded the development of a first-year experience curriculum in the college and secured \$6000 in external funds to pilot and evaluate the program, co-chaired the College Assessment Committee to develop and implement a college-wide assessment plan, and supported college technology use by working collaboratively with the College Technology Manager and technology committee.

As a graduate faculty in the Department of English, Dr. Watson teaches, publishes and presents on a range of literature focusing on 20<sup>th</sup> century African American literature; Southern American literature, and critical race and critical whiteness studies. She is author of *The Souls of White Folks: African American Writers Theorize Whiteness* (University Press of Mississippi, 2013) and the co-editor of *Unveiling Whiteness in the 21st Century: Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions* (Lexington Books, 2014). She has secured over \$400,000 in internal and external funding to support her scholarship and programming.

Dr. Watson currently serves on the Board for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. She is the recipient of IUP's University Senate Distinguished Faculty Award for Service (2002) and the Hilda Richards Award for Commitment to Diversity (2003).

Dr. Watson completed graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley before earning her PhD in English from Rice University (Houston, TX) in 1997.