

Veronica T. Watson, PhD
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Veronica T. Watson is Professor in the Department of English, Director of Graduate Studies in Literature and Criticism, and Convener for The Frederick Douglass Institute Collaborative (FDI Collaborative) of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. Elected graduate program director in 2017, she has initiated a program re-visioning process to ensure that graduates emerge prepared for the 21st century employment landscape they will navigate, both within the academy as well as outside of it. To date the L&C program has revamped its New Student Orientation and shifted its advising protocols to introduce career conversations from the first weeks of a student's academic journey, launched an alumni tracking and engagement initiative, and begun to review major curricular milestones that students encounter to ensure they have the potential to serve a variety of career trajectories.

Serving as Convener for FDI Collaborative since 2010, she works closely with the Chancellor's office and the 14 directors of the local Frederick Douglass Institutes 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 and a national campaign to connect students and faculty of color in conversations about careers in the professoriate—entitled the Inclusive Future Faculty Initiative—has been started.

Dr. Watson has also served in a number of university-level appointments to advance various initiatives. 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, 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. She currently serves on the University Planning Council, which is tasked with identifying and proposing promising innovations to ensure student success during a time of great transition at the university, and is a member of the INSPIRE team, a group of faculty and administrators appointed to conduct a comprehensive review of all academic programs offered at IUP.

Dr. Watson teaches, publishes and presents on a range of literature focusing on 20th 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). Her latest project, *The Short Stories of Frank Yerby*, will be available in May 2020. She has secured over \$600,000 in internal and external funding to advance her scholarship and to support university and systemwide diversity.

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.