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## USF ST. PETERSBURG NAMES NEW DEAN OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



*Allyson Watson. Photo credit: Colton Vines/Pete Henshaw, Northeastern State University*

USF St. Petersburg Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska has appointed Allyson Leggett Watson as dean of the College of Education. In providing leadership for the college, Watson will oversee the faculty and work closely with the university's leadership team to develop strategies to achieve USFSP's academic goals and objectives. She will join USFSP this summer.

Currently, Watson serves as assistant dean for the College of Education at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. She is the founder/director for TURN, the Teaching & Urban Reform Network, and serves as professor of educational foundations and leadership and the Eddings Endowed Chair for Urban Education, Outreach & Research. Prior to her service in higher education, she was a department team leader for Tulsa Public Schools.

"Dr. Watson brings a wealth of experience from her time at Northeastern State University, a U.S. Department of Education Designated Postsecondary Minority Institution serving more than 9,000 students on three campuses," said Wisniewska. "I look forward to working with Dr. Watson and am excited to welcome her to the USFSP community."

"I was familiar with Dr. Watson's work as a faculty member at NSU. She is a thoughtful, innovative educator," said Martin Tadlock, USFSP's regional vice chancellor of Academic Affairs. "Her current provost

describes her the same way, and I look forward to working with her as an innovative leader.”

Watson’s many accolades include the Mayor’s Commission on Women Pinnacle Award in Education, the “40 Under 40 Most Influential People in Oklahoma” award from Oklahoma Magazine, the Gates Millennium Scholar Award, and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Holmes Scholar Award. Her research includes a focus on urban education reform, women of color in higher education, and diversity through outreach.

“Now, more than ever, colleges of education need to promote teacher education and preparation programs,” said Watson. “As the dean, my goal is to work with the dynamic faculty at USFSP and the community that surrounds our great institution, and to promote the best ideas around undergraduate and graduate programs in teaching.”

Watson’s family has strong ties to the St. Petersburg community. Generations ago, her granduncle Gilbert Henry Leggett, a prominent African-American dentist, was one of the civic leaders who helped to integrate St. Petersburg.

“The St. Petersburg community is a cherished city for my family,” said Watson. “As a young child, my father shared stories about his uncle and taught my sister and me by example the importance of advocacy for others. I am assured that Leggetts for generations would agree that our uncle changed the trajectory of our path by reaching back to give other family members the opportunity to pursue an education.”

Watson holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration, Curriculum & Supervision and an M.Ed in Education Administration, Curriculum & Supervision from the University of Oklahoma. She also earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Bethune-Cookman University.

Effective July 1, Watson will take over for Olivia Hodges, who has served as interim dean since January. Hodges, associate dean and instructor of the College of Education, has been teaching at USFSP since 2007.

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