

ALI WATTS, PHD

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	<i>Pennsylvania State University</i> , Education Policy Studies Concentration: Higher Education Dissertation: <i>Response/able Funding: Mapping Faculty-Foundation Relations and the Pursuit of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and/or Racial Justice Projects</i> Committee: Drs. Alicia Dowd (Chair), Ebony Coletu, Royel Johnson & LaWanda Ward	2022
Ed.M.	<i>Boston University</i> , Education Leadership and Policy Studies Concentration: Higher Education Administration Advisor: Dr. Sonja Ardoin	2016
Graduate Certificate	<i>Kansas State University</i> , Academic Advising	2016
M.A.	<i>University of Georgia</i> , English Literature/Rhetoric and Composition Thesis: <i>Specters in the Stone: Echoes of the Uncanny in Short Stories of the African Diaspora</i>	2011
B.A.	<i>Colgate University</i> , English Literature Minor: Japanese Language <i>Magna cum laude</i> , Distinction in Core Curriculum	2007

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

Assistant Professor (Career Line), July 2022 - present

Director of Higher Education Programs, July 2022 - present

Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA

Center for the Study of Higher Education, Department of Education Policy Studies

Graduate Research Assistant, August 2017 - May 2022 (part-time)

Teaching Assistant, January 2020 - December 2022 (part-time)

University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Franklin College of Arts & Sciences, English Department

Graduate Instructor of Record, August 2010 - June 2011 (part-time)

TEACHING

University of Utah

- Socio-Cultural Foundations of U.S. Higher Education (M.Ed.) (FA22, FA23)
- MEd Capstone Seminar (SP23, SP24)
- Contemporary Issues in Diversity in Higher Education (SP23)
- EdD Practicum Seminar (SU23)
- MEd Internship Pro-Sem (FA23)
- Critical Legal Issues in US Higher Education (SP24)

Penn State University

- Diversity & Equity in Higher Education (Ph.D./Ed.D.) (SP20, FA20, FA21; Teaching Assistant for Alicia C. Dowd)

University of Georgia, English Dept.

- Multicultural Literature (B.A.) (SP11; Instructor of Record)
- First Year Composition, Special Topic: Rhetoric and Politics in the United States (B.A.) (FA10; 2 sections; Instructor of Record)

Guest Course Facilitator

- University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Jarrel Johnson; Introduction to Inquiry (PhD), (Sept., 2023); “Critical Inquiry: Moving the Posts”
- University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Erin Castro; Leadership for Diversity & Social Justice (PhD); (Sept. 23); “Networked Improvement Communities and the Pursuit of Racial Equity.”
- University of Missouri, Columbia, Dajanae Palmer; Introduction to Inquiry (PhD); (Sept. 23); “Critical Post-phenomenology.”
- University of North Carolina, Wilmington, Samantha Silberstein; Higher Education and Administration (M.A.) (Oct. 22); “Shared Governance and Academic Freedom”
- University of North Carolina, Wilmington, Samantha Silberstein; Introduction to Research Methods (M.A.) (Ap. 22); “Post-Qualitative Inquiry: An Initial Foray”
- Texas Tech University, Dajanae Palmer; Introduction to Qualitative Methods (Ph.D./Ed.D.) (Oct. 2021); “Re/Imagining Critical Phenomenological Education Research”
- Montclair State University, Blanca Vega; Foundations of Student and Academic Affairs Administration (M.A.) (Feb. 21). “Critical Perspectives on Enrollment Management”
- Penn State University, LaWanda Ward; Foundations of Higher Education (Ph.D./Ed.D.) (Oct. 19). “History and Happy Valley: Penn State College of Education, 1954-1963”
- Penn State University, LaWanda Ward; Foundations of Higher Education (Ph.D./Ed.D.) (Sep. 19). “Historiography and the Ethics of Evidence”

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES (* indicates student collaborator)

Peer-Reviewed Journal Article

Watts, A. (2019). Disturbing the dream of integration: A critical historiography of Penn State’s College of Education during the decade following Brown v. Board. *Journal of Critical Studies on Higher Education and Student Affairs*, 5(2), 7-21.

Book Chapters

Watts, A., & Dowd, A. C. (2023). Access and Equity in Higher Education. In *Research Handbook on the Transformation of Higher Education*. Leisyte, L., Dee, J., and van der Meulen, B. (Eds). Edward Elgar.

Watts, A. (2022). Beyond ‘Woke Play’: Strategies for Challenging Performative Allyship. In Student Affairs ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ Programming. In Johnson, R.M., Anya, U. & Garces, L.M. (Eds.) *Racial Equity on College Campuses: Connecting Research and Practice*. SUNY Press.

Encyclopedia Entries

Watts, A., & Johnson, R. M. (In Press). Meritocracy. In *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Social Justice in Education*. Winn, W. T. and Winn, L. T. (Eds.). Bloomsbury Press.

Watts, A. (2020). GI Bill. In M.J. Amey & David, M.E. (Eds.), *SAGE Encyclopedia of Higher Education*, 5v. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Institutional Reports

Clayton, A. B., Bailey, M., **Watts, A.**, McNamee, T. C., Slaughter, K. F. & McClendon, N. (2023). Supporting Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training. In J.K. Hinojosa, Guilbeau, J. P., & V. A. Sansone (Eds.) *Postsecondary student access and success in Nevada: An ASHE institute with southern Nevada higher education leaders*. Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Guthrie, D., Altland, J., Kern, S., Kirk, C., **Watts, A.**, & Zipf, S. (2019). Parsing the Priorities: A Qualitative Study of Messiah Campus Climate. Contracted by the Messiah College Campus Climate Action Team.

Watts, A., Kenney, A., Elmore, B. & Dowd, A. (2019) Center for the Performing Arts 2018-2019 Diversity & Inclusion Developmental Evaluation Report.

Manuscripts in Preparation (* indicates student co-author)

Rubin, P., Thomas*, S. & **Watts, A.** (Forthcoming). Between a Rock and a Hard Place? Considering How Governance Structure (In)Directly Influences Institutional Responses to State Higher Education Policies Targeting ‘Divisive’ Matters.

Watts, A. (under review). Coins and Community: Exploring Faculty Socialization, Relationality, and Equity-Oriented Grant-Seeking.

Watts, A. (under review). Notes toward a cyborg philanthropy: Educational grant-making and the pursuit of spatial justice.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Rubin, P. G., Thomas, S. & **Watts, A.** (2024). Institutional responses to state policies targeting ‘divisive’ higher education concepts: What do public statements suggest? Paper accepted for roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
- Watts, A.** (2024). Secure the bag: The Rockefeller Foundation and the Funding of Upward Bound, 1962-1968. Paper accepted for roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
- Watts, A.** (March 2024). Organizing in the In-Between: Dialogues on Administrative Graduate Assistant Activism. Paper accepted for presentation at the American College Personnel Association Annual Conference. Chicago, IL.
- Watts, A.,** Silberstein, S. & Palmer, D. (March 2024). It’s All Fun and Games: Advancing Critical Consciousness through Playful Pedagogy. Research-in-Progress paper accepted for presentation at the American College Personnel Association Annual Conference. Chicago, IL.
- Watts, A.** (Nov. 2023). Administrative Graduate Assistant Labor Activism: Implications for Civic Engagement in the Gig Academy. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Minneapolis, MN.
- Watts, A.,** Shaw, S.*, Dragunat, C., Leon Alvarado, D., Ahanonu, M.*, & Gregory, T.* (Nov. 2023). We’re making it up as we go: Collaborative worldmaking in a HESA graduate program. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Minneapolis, MN.
- Watts, A.** (May 2023). Queer Theory has Entered the CHAT: Making a Mess of Cultural Historical Activity Theory. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. Virtual.
- Watts, A. &** Silberstein, S. (April 2023). Student Affairs in the Upside Down: Critical Pedagogy Studies and Social Justice in Higher Education. Presented at the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) National Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- Carey, S. *, Gregory, T. *, Ahanonu, M. *, & **Watts, A.** (April 2023). Hyper-Christian Nationalism in Student Affairs: A Panel Discussion. Presented at the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) National Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- Watts, A.** (Nov. 2022). Coins and Community: Exploring Faculty Socialization, Relationality, and Equity-Oriented Grant-Seeking. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Las Vegas, NV.

- Watts, A.** (Nov. 2022). Here there be Dragons: Mapping the Waves of Foundation Philanthropy's Entanglement with Campus-Based DEI Efforts. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Las Vegas, NV.
- Watts, A.** (Nov. 2022). Community of Coins. Paper presented at the History of Education Society Annual Conference. Baltimore, MD.
- Watts, A.** (April, 2022). Notes Toward a Scyborg Philanthropy: Educational Grant-Making and the Pursuit of Spatial Justice. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Watts, A.,** Elmore, B. D., & Dowd, A. C. (April, 2022). Politics of Performance: Neoliberalism and the Logics of Racial Disposability in Performing Arts Programming. Poster presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Watts, A.** (November, 2021). Cashing In and Pushing Back: Exploring Faculty Socialization and Equity-Oriented Grantmaking. Paper accepted for presentation at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. San Juan, Puerto Rico. [Withdrawn due to COVID-19 concerns]
- Wilson, N., **Watts, A.,** Silberstein, S., Sowl, S. & Cho, K. (November, 2020). #SpreadingCommunity #NotCommunity Spread: Graduate Student Socialization and Well-Being in the COVID Era. Interactive Symposium presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. [Conference held virtually due to COVID-19].
- Watts, A.,** Dowd, A. C., Kenney, A., & Elmore, B. D. (April, 2020). Performance Politics: Neoliberalism and Whiteness at Work in Performing Arts Programming. Paper accepted for presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA. [Conference Cancelled due to COVID-19]
- Watts, A.** (November, 2019). Individualism and the Iron Cage: Reflections of Weber in the 2018 SFFA v. Harvard Amici Submissions. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Portland, OR.
- Watts, A.** (November, 2019). Hashtag 'Apologetics': A Speech Act Analysis of Institutional Responses to Student Racism on Social Media. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Portland, OR.
- Watts, A. & Kenney, A.** (May, 2019). Race in Residence: Reflections on CRiT-Walking Anti-Racist Programming in Undergraduate Residence Halls. Paper accepted for presentation at the Critical Race Studies in Education Association Annual Conference, Los Angeles, CA.
- Dowd, A. C., & **Watts, A.** (April, 2019). Performing Diversity: Strategies for Engaging Critical Analysis of DEI Programming. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Toronto, ON.

Watts, A. (November, 2018). Disturbing the Dream of Integration: A Critical Historiographic Retrospective on Penn State's College of Education During the Decade Following Brown v. Board. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference. Tampa, FL.

Watts, A. & Kariofyllis, A. (April, 2017). Student Drivers: Creating Space for Student Voices in A.G.I.L.E Instructional Design Implementation. Paper presented at the United States Distance Learning Association Annual Meeting. Indianapolis, IN.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Watts, A. (2023). Queer Theory Has Entered the CHAT. PRIDE Forum Invited Speaker. George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Clayton, A., Bailey, M, **Watts, A.**, Slaughter, K., McClenden, N., & McNamee, T. (2022). Supporting rural postsecondary and workforce training. ASHE/Ascendium Nevada Institute Presentation. Las Vegas, NV.

Watts, A. (April, 2022). Business Meeting Panel: Future Directions for Research. Education and Philanthropy SIG, American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.

Hallmark, T., **Watts, A.**, Sowl, S. & Silberstein, S. (April, 2021, Chairs/Organizers). Beyond the Manuscript: Strategies for Building Research-to-Practice Communities for Social Change. Division J Graduate Student Presidential Session, American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Virtual Platform.

Watts, A. (December, 2020). Isolated but not Alone: Strategies for Building Critical Counter-Spaces for Doctoral Student Socialization. "Lion's Pride Speaker Series" hosted by the Penn State College of Education Graduate Student Council. State College, PA.

Sowl, S., Silberstein, S., & **Watts, A.** (April, 2020). Finding Your Fit: A Panel Discussion on Alternative Academic (Alt-Ac) Career Opportunities in Higher Education. Division J Fireside Chat planned for American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA. [Conference Cancelled due to COVID-19]

Watts, A. (June, 2019). Monsters in the Mirror: Exploring 'How Whiteness Works' in Campus-Based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives. Paper presented at the *Phakmisa* Summer Convening: Graduate Research Showcase. State College, PA.

DeLuca Fernandez, S., **Watts, A.**, Sharp, S., Kolb, A. (February, 2019). Dilemmas of Practice and Gaps in Research. Panel presented at the Envisioning Racial Equity on College Campuses Symposium. State College, PA.

Watts, A., and Kenney, A. (August, 2018). Getting Real about Race. Presented at the Penn State Residential Life RA-Orientation Conference. State College, PA.

Dowd, A.C., Johnson, R.M., Paulson, K., and **Watts, A.** (June 2018 and June 2019). Obtaining Buy-In for Diversity and Equity Plans. Presented at the Penn State Academic Leadership Academy. State College, PA.

Dibinga, O. and **Watts, A.** (January, 2016). MLK Keynote Workshop. Presented at the Promfret School MLK Day Celebrations. Pomfret, CT.

Watts, A. (November, 2015). Law School Admissions 101. Panel presented at the Law School Admissions Council San Francisco Forum. San Francisco, CA.

GRANT SEEKING

Administrative Graduate Assistant Labor Activism: Implications for Civic Engagement in the Gig Academy (2023 - 2024), UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement Fellows Program, \$25,000 (not funded). (PI: Ali Watts).

The potential of play-as-praxis: Advancing wonder in HESA Graduate Preparation Programs (2023 - 2024), NASPA Channing Briggs Research Grant, \$5,000 (not funded). (PIs: Ali Watts, Samantha Silberstein).

Secure the bag: The Rockefeller Foundation and Funding Upward Bound, 1962-1968 (2023 - 2024), American Education Research Association, Division F Seed Grant Research Program, \$1,000 (Funded). (PI: Ali Watts).

Racial Equity: Fostering a sense of belonging among racially and ethnically minoritized students by transforming university Makerspaces (2023 - 2026), National Science Foundation Racial Equity in STEM Education Program, \$504,000 (not funded). (PIs: Royel M. Johnson, Jessica Menold, Matthew Parker, Lauren Griggs, Ali Watts).

Racial Equity Research-Practice Symposium (2018-2019), Spencer Foundation Conference Grant, \$50,000 (funded). PIs: Royel M. Johnson, Uju Anya, Liliana Garces; Ali Watts & Evelyn Ambriz, named graduate assistant project coordinators).

ADDITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION & STUDENT AFFAIRS EMPLOYMENT

Boston University, Metropolitan College, Boston, MA

Office of Distance Education

Senior Faculty and Student Support Administrator, July 2016 - June 2017

Boston University, School of Law, Boston, MA

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

Assistant Director of JD Admissions, February 2014 - June 2016

Washington International School, Washington, DC

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

Assistant to the Director of Admissions & Financial Aid, Nov. 2011 – Feb. 2014

Colgate University, Hamilton, NY*Office of Residential Education*

Residential Education Coordinator, Sophomore Year Experience, June 2007 - July 2008

Coordinator of the Broad Street Fund, August 2007 - July 2008

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

University of Utah (2022 - present)

Academic Senate, Committee on Student Affairs

2023-2024

University Campus Climate Working Group

2023-2024

Educational Leadership & Policy Higher Education Program Admissions Committee

Chair (2022 - present)

University Task Force on Career-Line Faculty, Member (2023 - present)

Education Leadership & Policy Scholarship Committee (2022 - present)

A. Roy Olpin Student Union Scholarship Reviewer (2022 - present)

Pride Week Organizing Committee, Member (2023 - present)

Pennsylvania State University (2017-2022)

Penn State Presidential Select Commission on Racism, Bias, and Community Safety

Truth & Reconciliation Subcommittee Member (2021 - 2022)

Faculty Senate, Graduate Student Senator (2021 - 2022)

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Delegate for the College of Education (2020 - 2021)

Representative to the Graduate Council (Spring 2021)

Liaison to the University Academic Integrity Committee (2020 - 2022)

Advocacy and Human Diversity Committee Member (2020 - 2022)

Organizational Conduct Review Board, Hearing Officer (2017 - 2020)

Boston University (2014-2017)

School of Education—Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee Member (2016 - 2017)

Office of Distance Education—Digital Accessibility Committee member; Chair of Legal

Compliance team (2016 - 2017)

School of Law Admissions—Chair of Publications, Alumni Engagement, and Social Media

Committees (2014 - 2016)

Colgate University (2007-2008)

Social Norming Committee member

Dean of the College Advisory Committee

Sophomore Year Experience Civic Engagement Programming co-Chair

JOURNAL AFFILIATIONS AND REVIEWER SERVICE

Departures in Critical Qualitative Research

Reviewer (2022 - present)

Journal of Critical Studies on Higher Education and Student Affairs

Associate Editor for Communications (2019 - 2020)

Journal of Student Affairs

Review Board Member (2019 – 2021)

Review of Educational Research

Invited Reviewer (2020 - 2023)

Research in Education

Reviewer (2020 - 2021)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE

AERA- American Educational Research Association (2018 – present)

Philanthropy & Education SIG—Program Co-Chair (2023 - present)

Div J Graduate Student Network Social Media Chair (2020 - 2021)

Div J Graduate Council Representative at Large (2019 - 2020)

Annual Conference Reviewer (2018-present)

Div F: History and Historiography

Div J: Postsecondary Education

Law and Education SIG

Philanthropy & Education SIG

ASHE- Association for the Study of Higher Education (2018 – present)

Annual conference proposal reviewer (2018 - present)

Early Career Faculty Workshop Participant (2020, 2021)

Graduate Student Policy Seminar Participant (2020)

ACPA- American College Personnel Association (2013 – 2020; 2022 - present)

Council for Professional Preparation—Directorate Member (2023 - 2025)

Coalition for Women’s Identities—Directorate Member and Advocacy Coordinator
(2023 - 2025)

NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (2011 – 2018; 2022 - present)

AWARDS and HONORS

- ACPA Council for Faculty and Preparation Programs Teaching Excellence Award Nominee, 2024 (decisions pending)
- UC National Center for Free Speech and Civil Discourse Institute Invitee, Advancing the Mission of Higher Education in a Polarized Environment, 2023
- Penn State University Dr. Marcia Clarke-Yapi Dissertation Award for Distinction in Equity-Minded Research, 2023
- University of Utah Career Champion Awardee, 2023
- ASHE/Ascendium Fellow—Supporting Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training Research Team, 2022

- Penn State Graduate and Professional Student Association Kenneth Martin Exemplary Service Award, 2021
- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Graduate Student Travel Award, 2021
- Dr. Jonathan D. Fife Research Fund in Higher Education Award, Penn State College of Education, 2019-2020
- AERA- Division J Emerging Scholars Workshop Selection, 2018, 2021
- Dean's Graduate Assistantship for Engaged Scholarship and Research in Education, Penn State College of Education, 2017 - 2021
- Graham Endowed Fellowship, Penn State University, 2017-2018
- University of Georgia Excellence in Research Nominee, 2012