



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

School of Communication



## Vera Walker Hawkins, Ph.D.

*Interim Chair, Department of Journalism*

Dr. Vera Walker Hawkins is the Interim Chair of the Journalism Department in the School of Communication at Texas Southern University. Her research focuses on digital inclusion, technology and media empowerment for children and their communities. Dr. Hawkins is an affiliate researcher and founding member of the Texas Southern University Center for Excellence in Housing and Community Development Policy Research. The CEHCDPR, one of two such national Centers for Excellence located at an HBCU, is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Dr. Hawkins is a member of the grant-writing team who received the initial funding \$1,000,000 dollar award to start CEHCDPR, where her current investigation examines the impact of broadband and digital inclusion within minority and underserved communities--particularly Third Ward and Harris County.

Dr. Hawkins holds a Post-Doctorate in comparative media studies from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and received her formative media research training from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her degrees include a Doctor of Philosophy in journalism from The University of Texas at Austin, a Master's of Arts in telecommunications management from The Ohio University and a Bachelor's of Arts in drama from Tufts University.

A tenured professor of journalism, Dr. Hawkins serves in numerous administrative and faculty positions at Texas Southern, since arriving in 2005 including QEP Director, Founding Board Member of the Teaching and Learning Center and Vice President of the Faculty Senate. Prior to joining the faculty at TSU, she was awarded approximately \$200, 000 dollars by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) for her Post-Doctorate research at MIT focused on children and new media. While at MIT, Dr. Hawkins consulted with the *Games that Teach* initiative and reviewed game prototypes for cultural relevance. Also, she engaged in lectures and reviewed research in the MIT Media Lab.

As a National Association of Television Programming Executives (NATPE) Faculty Fellow, Dr. Hawkins served at WGBH-TV PBS in Boston in the Interactive Kids Division. At WGBH, she observed and participated in planning and work sessions for maintaining PBS websites including *Arthur*, *Between the Lions*, *Zoom*, *Postcards from Buster*, *Curious George*, *Martha Speaks*, *Design Squad* and *Fetch*. She interviewed the content developers and reviewed programming for broadband as well as other platforms including CDROM, interactive television and Wii.

In addition to the NATPE Faculty Fellowship, Dr. Hawkins is the recipient of several prestigious communication fellowships including: the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication and the Institute for Diverse Leadership Fellowship from the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

Dr. Hawkins is a Member of the National Communication Association, The Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication, Women in Animation and the Children's Media Association. Other projects for Dr. Hawkins include creating an original preschool animated television show that teaches science principles to children and working to develop the next generation of urban communicators.