

TEMPO FOCUS:

DR. NAKIA “KEKE” LIGGINS

Dr. Nakia “Keke” Liggins is a faculty member at Florida State University in the Learning Systems Institute which focuses on research and support of students with disabilities. Her work centers on improving educational outcomes and access for students with disabilities through research, training, and educational data analysis. She also supports families and educators by developing educational practices and resources for students with disabilities. Dr. Liggins is deeply committed to empowering underserved communities and bridging the gap between policy, practice, and lived experiences.

Dr. Liggins has been an educator since September 2007. Through this journey, she was faced with several challenges. “Navigating systems that often lack equity and accessibility for students with dis-

abilities, balancing leadership in both academic and nonprofit spaces, and pushing for innovation in traditionally slow-to-change environments are some of the things I encountered,” she said. Dr. Liggins holds a Doctorate in Social Work (nonclinical, focused on leading large-scale organizations and creating social impact) and has extensive training in adult education, workforce development, special education, and leadership development. In January of this year, she received a miniMBA from Miami University. Her Doctor of Social Work is from University of Southern California, and her Master of Arts in Special Education is from University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas. Her educational journey began at Pace University in New York where she received the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Dr. Liggins recently launched a financial education business called Retirement Obsessed (www.retirementobsessed.com). “I started the research for Retirement Obsessed as part of my doctoral research in Social Work, where I focused on leading large-scale social impact initiatives,” she said. “The data revealed a troubling trend—most Millennial women are managing their own finances, yet they remain underpaid and significantly underprepared for retirement. Retirement Obsessed was created to change that by empowering Millennial women to earn more, pay off debt, and build lasting financial security through education, community, and action.” Active in the community, Dr. Liggins is a member of Bradenton/Sarasota (FL) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated where she serves as co-chair of the “Exemplify-



ing Excellence Scholarship” committee. She is also Executive Vice President of the Junior League of Sarasota.

In her spare time, Dr. Liggins enjoys dancing, reading, fellowshiping

at church, meditating and practicing sound healing. She is passionate about education equity, supporting families of children with disabilities, and creating innovative tools that em-

power people to thrive academically, socially, and economically. She is married to Paul Liggins and they have two sons, Paul and Sean.