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SIT Names Dr. Cheikh Thiam New Dean for Africa South of the Sahara

BRATTLEBORO, Vermont, Dec. 13, 2019 -- Dr. Cheikh Thiam, academic director for SIT Study Abroad in Senegal, will become SIT academic dean for Africa South of the Sahara starting Jan. 1, 2020, School for International Training announced today.

Thiam co-leads SIT Study Abroad programs in Senegal focused on global security and religious pluralism, and designed a pioneering undergraduate program that explores how hip-hop artists and cultural influencers are redefining Africa's future. "I am looking forward to taking on this expanded role at SIT, while drawing from my research examining collective imaginations of being and identity in Africa and the African diaspora in the colonial and postcolonial era," said Thiam, who has directed study abroad programs in Senegal for the past 10 years.

As academic dean, Thiam will lead one of the broadest portfolios of programs in Africa of any U.S. institution. SIT's multidisciplinary portfolio of accredited undergraduate programs covers nine sub-Saharan countries and encompasses subjects such as biodiversity and wildlife management, multiculturalism and human rights, health policy and social transformation, and even offers a journalism program. Several of SIT's Global MA programs also have components based in Africa, including climate change in Tanzania, humanitarian assistance in Uganda, global health in Kenya, and international diplomacy in South Africa.

Thiam brings to his new role a strong background in U.S. higher education. He has an MA and a PhD in comparative literature from Binghamton University, an MA in French from the University of Provence in Aix-en-Provence, as well as a BA from Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. He served as associate professor of African American studies, African studies, and French at The Ohio State University. He is the author of *Return to the Kingdom of Childhood: Re-envisioning the Legacy and Philosophical Relevance of Negritude*, published by Ohio State University Press in 2014.

Thiam also was the editor of *Negritude Reloaded*, a special issue of *Journal on African Philosophy*, an associate editor of *Research in African Literatures*, and has published widely in literature and philosophy journals such as *Ethiopiques*, *West Africa Review*, *La Revue Africaine*, *La Revue du Graat*, *French Review*, *Research in African Literature*, *Dalhousie French Review*, and *Journal on African Philosophy*. He recently completed a second book manuscript, "Epistemologies from the South: Negritude, Modernity, and the Idea of Africa."

In announcing his appointment, SIT President Dr. Sophia Howlett said, “Cheikh’s outstanding scholarship and network of relationships across Africa and the United States, combined with his passion for student-centered study abroad classrooms, make him an exceptional addition to our leadership team.”

Thiam will join Howlett’s Council of Deans, a group that oversees SIT’s undergraduate programs, the SIT Graduate Institute, and SIT’s stable of more than 80 study abroad programs in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and the International Honors Program.

Thiam succeeds Dr. Daniel Lumonya, who has served as academic dean for the region since August 2015. Prior to that time, Lumonya was SIT academic director in Uganda. Lumonya completed his PhD in development sociology at Cornell University. “I have had the chance to work with Cheikh on our evolving programs in the region and I welcome the depth of experience he brings to this position,” Lumonya said.

Lumonya is leaving to pursue a career in research, teaching and community service from his country, Uganda. “I want to thank Dan for his dedicated work and stellar contributions to SIT, both as an academic director and dean,” Howlett said. “We will all miss him.”

Link to release: www.sit.edu/pressrelease/sit-names-new-dean-for-africa-south-of-the-sahara/

Link to SIT Study Abroad: <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/>

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