

Professional Assessment Statement

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Dear Colleagues,

I am here at Rollins because I love teaching and learning. I fully embrace the college's mission to distinguish itself as an institution that educates students for global citizenship and responsible leadership, disseminating the values of a liberal arts education into the wider community beyond our campus. This is my 26th year at Rollins and I am happy to say that I still feel great passion for my work as a professor. I am proud of Rollins' historic connection to Hamilton Holt and John Dewey, whose ideas have had a clear influence on my thinking in the areas of active pedagogy, the civic values of higher education, and the role of pragmatic educational approaches in addressing society's most pressing challenges. I appreciate this opportunity to share my recent work and reflect on my plans for the future.

For the sake of clarity, this statement is organized around each of the three primary areas of emphasis for Rollins faculty: *teaching*, *scholarship*, and *service*. In practice, these broad categories often intersect in meaningful and surprising ways. Over the years I have worked hard to integrate the three areas as fully as possible. This integration of my responsibilities as a professor has energized and grounded my work in ways that I am only now beginning to fully appreciate.

Teaching

Teaching and mentoring have always been at the heart of how I see myself as a professor. In the broadest sense, I see my work at the college as an ongoing project to make meaning of the world, both for my students and me. As a geographer, this plays out through the study of biocultural landscapes and

sustainability. As a professor of environmental studies at Rollins, it is most evident in the larger questions and motivations that shape my teaching and scholarship.

From the moment I arrived at Rollins I've engaged in an ongoing process of experimentation and reflection in an effort to improve the quality of my teaching. This process of trial-and-error is the lifeblood of my work, and I am comfortable with the idea that I still have a great deal to learn about teaching.

Much of the effort to improve my teaching over the past decade has focused on the quality of faculty-student and student-student interaction in my courses. Much of the course material that I once covered through lectures is now the focus of question-centered discussions. This requires thoughtful planning and careful wording of discussion questions. Questions must be timely and provocative, addressing the complexity of the issue at hand. In some cases, even the alteration of a single word in a question can have a profound impact on the nature of the subsequent discussion.

I feel very fortunate to be teaching at an institution that places a high value on pedagogical innovation and experimentation. From 2006 to 2011, I held the *Diane and Michael Maher Chair of Distinguished Teaching*, an honor made all the more special when I reflect on the many colleagues at Rollins who are great teachers. The Maher Chair gave me the opportunity to experiment with pedagogical ideas and approaches that continue to shape my teaching to this day. In the section below I highlight just one of these approaches.

An Immersive Model for Student Engagement

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching at Rollins is the opportunity to work with students in the field. This type of experiential learning goes to the heart of why I am a college professor. Getting away from the formal classroom setting facilitates better communication between my students and me, creating a richer context for learning. Field-study experiences also allow my enthusiasm for the subject matter to be a significant motivational factor in the learning process. In

some cases, students who could only be described as “dormant” in their regular classes on campus have “come to life” on these trips – with a shift in enthusiasm and engagement that is difficult to put into words.

In 2007, Dr. Barry Allen and I received a \$50,000 grant from the Thomas P. Johnson Foundation to develop and implement an exciting new curricular project titled: *Down to Earth or Out to Lunch: The Hidden Landscapes of Food in America*. We designed the project to explore an alternative model of college learning that places a much greater emphasis on student immersion and the integration of classroom learning and field study. The project began with a simple idea. For more than a decade, Dr. Allen and I had been teaching field courses during the intersession periods (January and May). Most of these courses examined some aspect of sustainable development, either within the United States or abroad (e.g., Costa Rica), typically for a couple of weeks.

As one might expect, the level of student engagement in these courses is very high. Some of this is undoubtedly the result of getting into the field and out of the classroom, but there are other factors as well: 1) the organization of coursework and field study around a single interdisciplinary theme (e.g., food and sustainability) tends to sharpen the nature of student engagement and learning; and 2) the student experience outside of the classroom (e.g., field work, shared meals) fosters a level of student interaction and camaraderie that is difficult to reproduce in a typical semester-length, on-campus course.

In reflecting on these field study experiences, it is clear that the immersion of students in an experiential learning community yields great benefits in terms of student engagement. This led to the question: How can we take the best elements of the field study experience and integrate them into a “normal” semester of learning? The answer to this question is reflected in the project outlined in the following paragraphs.

In Fall 2007, Dr. Allen and I teamed up to teach a semester-length immersion experience for a group of 13 incoming freshman and two peer mentors. Students enrolled in the program took four linked courses (two courses taught by each professor) organized around the theme of *Food and Sustainability*. The idea was to teach students about sustainability using an immersion approach that is similar to that which is optimal when learning a foreign language.

Each of the four courses approached issues of food and sustainability from a different perspective and each course was organized around big questions, with a major emphasis on active student participation. To reinforce the idea of an interdisciplinary learning community, each professor participated fully in all four courses (i.e., I was a student in both of Dr. Allen's courses and he was a student in my courses). This idea of the professor as student played a key role in the success of the project.

The structure of this project (all participants together in four courses) allowed us to operate with a completely flexible schedule, free of conflicts for both students and professors. This allowed us to meet outside of the normally scheduled class periods, adding a great degree of spontaneity to the semester. As a result, we were able to integrate a wide range of field experiences into the course, including visits to organic farms, farmers' markets, a local citrus grove, organic orchards, slow food restaurants, and a number of local natural areas. The highlight of these field experiences was a ten-day, mid-semester field study trip to California.

Beyond the immediate outcome for our students, which was overwhelmingly positive, the goal of this experimental project was to explore its potential as a sustainable model for interdisciplinary learning. We followed this early experiment with additional immersion semesters in Fall 2009, Fall 2012, and most recently in Fall 2019. Each of these subsequent immersion semesters had a similar curricular structure, with 12-day, mid-semester field study trips to Oregon (2009 and 2012) and California (2019). By integrating many of the best elements of the

intersession field experience into a “normal” semester, our goal was to stimulate new thinking and thoughtful discussion about alternative curricular structures and “hands on” approaches to student learning during a traditional semester.

Dr. Allen and I are currently scheduled to teach a modified immersion semester in Spring 2023 where 16 students will take two linked spring term courses titled: *ENV 323 Conservation of Biodiversity* (Lines) and *ENV 365 Environment and Development in Central America* (Allen). When the semester concludes in May 2023, those same 16 students will join Dr. Allen and me on a nine-day field study trip to explore conservation and development in the tropical forests of Central Panama and the Canal Zone.

Field-based teaching and pedagogical experimentation are the heart and soul of my teaching. This is why I came to Rollins, and this is why (after 26 years) I still love teaching! The time and effort involved in designing these experiences for students is significant, but well worth it. Looking back over the past decade I realize these are the most intensely rewarding experiences of my career. Looking forward, I plan to continue this same pattern of pedagogical activity.

Overview of Teaching Activities

This section briefly highlights my activities in the area of teaching over the past twelve years:

1. Teaching Awards and Recognition
Cornell Award for Distinguished Teaching (2012)
Diane and Michael Maher Chair of Distinguished Teaching (2006 to 2011)
Hugh McKean Award (selected by graduating seniors) (2009 and 2015)
2. Developed and taught field study courses in the following locations:
California (*October 2019*)
Costa Rica (*May 2012 and May 2019*)
Oregon (*Oct 2012*)
Iceland (*May 2010 - student-faculty research project*)
3. Taught fourteen different courses, including two different *Honors* courses, multiple *Rollins Foundations (rFLA)* courses, field study courses, and the capstone course for the Environmental Studies major (ENV 413).

4. Organized and led more than **50 field study trips** to natural areas in Florida including: Wekiva Springs State Park, Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park, Tiger Creek Preserve, Leu Gardens, San Felasco Hammock State Park, Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, Ichetucknee Springs State Park, and Oleno State Park.
5. Organized and co-led a working group of Rollins professors on the logistics of **outdoor teaching during the 2020-2021 academic year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**;
6. My Course Instructor Evaluations (CIE) during this period reflect a very strong and consistent pattern of student engagement, effective teaching, and active learning.

Service

Over the past decade I have had the opportunity to serve the college, my colleagues, and students in many different capacities, both formal and informal. In service to the college, I've tried to focus my energy on those areas where I can make the most meaningful contributions. In a formal capacity, I've been able to serve the college in ways that have helped me become a more conscientious, confident, and well-rounded member of the Rollins faculty. In a more informal capacity, I have made a strong effort over the past decade to be a supportive colleague, a thoughtful and conscientious student advisor, and a source of positive intellectual energy on our campus.

Looking forward, I plan to continue this pattern of professional service and I anticipate new opportunities to contribute. This summer, I'll be serving on the college's ***SDG Strategic Initiative Summer Working Group***, an important first step in exploring the potential role of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in shaping the future direction of the college.

Student Advising

A faculty advisor is only as effective as the time and effort that he or she is willing to invest in his/her students. In my role as faculty advisor, I strive to be both conscientious and proactive. I find great satisfaction in my role as an advisor.

My office door is always open, and my students know this. Along with teaching, advising is the most satisfying aspect of my work at the college.

Overview of Professional Service Activities

This section briefly highlights my activities in the area of professional service during the past decade:

1. Served as **Chair** of the Department of Environmental Studies (2004 - 2017; 2019 to present);
2. Served as **Co-Chair** of a Working Faculty Group on Outdoor Teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (with Ellane Park) (2020-2021);
3. Served in multiple **faculty development** roles including the following:
R-Compass Faculty Advising Mentor (2018 - 2020);
KEY Faculty Advisor Leadership team (2014 - 2015);
New Faculty Mentoring Team (2001, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2016).
4. Served in multiple **faculty governance** roles including the following:
Faculty Advisory Group – COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey (2020 - 21);
Strategic Planning Task Force on Civic Engagement (2016 - 2017);
Faculty Evaluation Committee (2012 - 2013);
Ad Hoc Committee on FEC (Faculty Evaluation) Workload (2017);
All Faculty Appeals Committee (2014 – 2015 and 2018 - 2021);
Book Arts Advisory Group (2018 - 2021);
Honors Program Advisory Board (2014 - 2015).
5. Served on **Campus-wide Search Committee** for Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Provost (2016);
6. Served on multiple **Faculty Search Committees** including:
Environmental Studies (2015, 2016, 2021); Economics (2014); Sociology (2014); and Chemistry (2012 and 2014).

Scholarship

During the past decade I have been active in multiple lines of research. My scholarly interests are fairly eclectic, and I have always operated from the belief that it is possible for an individual to make scholarly contributions across multiple areas of study. I am energized by my scholarly collaborations with colleagues in

other disciplines and I enjoy the challenge of interdisciplinary work. My teaching has benefitted greatly from these multiple lines of inquiry.

From 2005 to 2010, the primary focus of my scholarship was a project on design issues associated with alternative-fuel vehicles and renewable energy infrastructure. The project was funded through a \$160,00 grant from the Florida Hydrogen Initiative and the US Department of Energy. I served as project manager and coordinated a team of researchers from Rollins College, Arizona State University, and Florida Atlantic University. Peer-reviewed publications and research presentations from this project are detailed in my vitae.

As my Department of Energy project began winding down in 2010, I shifted my focus to a different (but thematically related) project focused on the relationships between scale and sustainability in the renewable energy landscapes of Iceland and Dominica. I had worked on a sustainable development project in Dominica years ago and since that time I had been thinking intensely about relationships between scale and sustainability. This led to a series of collaborations with my colleague, Rachel Simmons.

From 2011 to 2017, I collaborated with Rachel on an interdisciplinary project infusing art and science, focused on the relationships between scale and sustainability in the renewable energy landscapes of Iceland. Specifically, the project examined the challenge of balancing large-scale development of green energy infrastructure (primarily hydropower and geothermal) with Iceland's desire to preserve the traditional scale and historical fabric of its rural landscapes. This collaboration resulted in a number of presentations, a publication, and three public exhibitions of our work:

Exhibitions

The Aesthetics of Scale. Rachel Simmons and Lee Lines, *The Orlando Museum of Art*, Orlando, FL, March 7 – April 28, 2013.

Rollins Faculty Biennial Exhibition. Rachel Simmons and Lee Lines, *Cornell Fine Arts Museum*, Winter Park, FL, January 4 – August 31, 2014.

Precipice. Dana Hargrove (Curator), Lee Lines, Dawn Roe, and Rachel Simmons, *Deiglan*, Akureyri, Iceland. May 2017.

Presentations and Publication

Chambliss, Julian, Lee Lines, and Rachel Simmons. *Interdisciplinary Collaboration* (Panel Discussion). Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park FL, 2014.

Chambliss, Julian, Lee Lines, and Rachel Simmons. *Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Two Working Models*. School of Visual Arts: Twenty-seventh Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists, New York, 2013.

Lines, Lee, and Rachel Simmons. *Visual Narratives of Scale and Sustainability*. School of Visual Arts: Twenty-sixth Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists, New York, 2012.

Lines, Lee, Rachel Simmons, and Moriah Russo. 2011. Art and Environmental Design in the Icelandic Landscape. Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: School of Visual Arts.

This interdisciplinary collaboration, although challenging in many ways, was an amazing learning experience, opening up entirely new approaches for understanding scale and landscape. In 2017, we shifted the focus of our collaboration to a project titled: **Visible Climate**, which focused on sites of documented climate change impacts in North America. This project also sits at the intersection of science and art, with the goal of communicating climate change science to a wider public audience. The project is briefly described below:

Visible Climate is the product of more than 200 hours of field work in our national parks, researching and documenting climate change impacts, followed by a collaborative process of translating visual evidence into an artist's book to shed light on the impacts of climate change in some of our nation's most iconic landscapes. To create the work, Lines' original digital photographs (and selected historical national park images) were reduced to black and white, transferred to Stonehenge paper, hand-colored and then re-digitized by Simmons. This multi-step process created a selective loss of information and degradation, while the hand-colorization references and challenges romanticized landscapes from postcards produced when the parks were first mass marketed to early 20th century visitors. Lines' handwritten captions – based on his field work in the parks – imagine the voices of park visitors over decades as they encounter changing habitats, receding glaciers, and drought-altered landscapes.

Visible Climate greatly expanded my firsthand understanding of global warming and the ecological impacts of human-induced climate change in North America. In 2017-2018, I spent many weeks in the field, observing and documenting a wide range of climate change impacts including receding glaciers, shifting habitat boundaries, rising sea level impacts, unprecedented drought, and extreme forest fires. This project (and the visual materials assembled) play a key role in my teaching, as climate change is a major component of many courses I teach, including: *The Geosphere (ENV 130)* and *Conservation of Biodiversity (ENV 323)*.

To date, this project has resulted in the creation of an artist book, a museum exhibition, a publication, and two public presentations.

Artist Book

Visible Climate: Postcards from America's Changing Landscapes, Lee Lines and Rachel Simmons, 2020, print-on-demand artists book, open edition, 10" x 8" hardcover. Preview at <https://www.blurb.com/b/10148272-visible-climate>

Exhibition

Rollins Faculty Biennial Exhibition (Visible Climate). Rachel Simmons and Lee Lines, *Cornell Fine Arts Museum*, Winter Park, FL, April 10 – August 29, 2021.

Presentations and Publication

Lines, Lee, and Rachel Simmons. 2021. *Visible Climate*. Mid-America Print Council – Tipping Point, 32/33, 30-31.

Lines, Lee and Rachel Simmons. *Visible Climate* (Faculty Exhibition Talk). Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park FL, 2021.

Lines, Lee. *Visible Climate: America's Changing Landscapes*. Center for Health and Wellbeing, Winter Park, FL, 2022.

Over the past decade I have also worked on a few side projects, leading to minor publications, presentations, and an op-ed piece, including the following:

Lines, Lee. 2021. Fire in Mind: The Sandhill at Wekiwa Spring State Park. The Florida Geographer, 52 (1), 51-52.

"Faith in Hurricane Forecasts but Denial of Climate Change; Irrational, Dishonest"
Guest Column, Orlando Sentinel, November 1, 2018.

Prieto-Calixto, Alberto and Lee Lines. *The Rise and Fall of Professional Jai Alai in the Americas*. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Boston, 2017.

Lines, Lee. 2015. Edward Burtynsky: Manufacturing #18. In Art For Rollins: The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art: Volume II, edited by Abigail R. Goodman. Winter Park FL, Rollins College.

Klepek, James and Barry Allen and Lee Lines. *Traditional Agricultural Landscapes: An Emerging Paradigm for World Heritage* (Research Poster). American Society for Environmental History Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 2014.

Going forward, my future plans center on a scholarly project titled ***Ecologies of Scale***, which brings together multiple lines of inquiry in a new project focused on working forests. Please see my see attached sabbatical plan for more details.

In closing

I see my strengths as a faculty member primarily in the areas of teaching, advising, and service and I have always viewed my scholarship as being in support of my teaching. With that said, I am very excited to break new ground on my next scholarly project (Ecologies of Scale) and I appreciate this opportunity to reflect on my plans and accomplishments as I enter what will likely be the final decade of my career.