



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The LeRoy Collins Institute Announces New Director

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The LeRoy Collins Institute today announced that Lonna Rae Atkeson has been named its new director, overseeing all daily activities of the Institute. Dr. Atkeson is a renowned expert on election science and administration, survey research, public policy, voting rights, state politics, public opinion, and political behavior. She comes to the Institute from a position as professor and regents lecturer of political science at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Atkeson will replace Dr. Carol S. Weissert, who is retiring at the end of July after serving as director of the Institute for 14 years.

The [LeRoy Collins Institute](#), located on the campus of Florida State University, studies and promotes policy solutions to issues facing the people of Florida and the United States.

“We are extremely pleased to welcome Dr. Atkeson as our new director,” said Lester Abberger, chairman of the LeRoy Collins Institute. “As a scholar and expert on public policy and elections, Dr. Atkeson is uniquely positioned to lead the Institute into the future.”

Dr. Atkeson earned plaudits for her public policy work in New Mexico, and served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and various private companies. Her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the JEHT Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, the Golisano Foundation, the Thornburg Foundation, the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the New Mexico Secretary of State, and Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

“Dr. Atkeson’s experience throughout her career and her knowledge of policy and research make her an ideal fit for the Institute,” said Dr. Weissert, outgoing director. “We are honored to have her join us and look forward to her tenure leading the organization through an interesting period in our nation’s political life.”

Dr. Atkeson received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Riverside and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in Boulder. She will assume the role of Director effective August 9, 2021.

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About the LeRoy Collins Institute

Established in 1988, the LeRoy Collins Institute is a nonpartisan, statewide policy organization that studies and promotes creative solutions to key private and public issues facing the people of Florida and the nation. The Institute, located in Tallahassee at Florida State University, is affiliated and works in collaboration with the State University

System of Florida. Named in honor of former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins, the Institute is governed by a distinguished board of directors, chaired by Lester Abberger. Other board members include executives, local elected officials, and other professionals from throughout the state.