Jason Briner Professor Department of Geology University at Buffalo

Greenland Ice Sheet Mass Loss Will Exceed Holocene Values this Century

The Greenland Ice Sheet (GrIS) is losing mass at an elevated rate. Given the short-term nature of the observational record, it is difficult to assess the historical significance of this mass-loss trend. In this talk, I will place contemporary and future rates of GrIS mass loss within the context of natural variability of the past 12,000 years by forcing a highly resolved icesheet model with a new ensemble of climate histories constrained by ice core data. Our simulations take place in surface-mass-balance-dominated southwestern Greenland. The results agree favorably with independent chronologies of GrIS margin history, based on over a decade of cosmogenic nuclide exposure dating and local production rate calibration by joint Buffalo-Lamont collaboration. The highest Holocene ice loss rates occurred in the early Holocene, and were up to 6000 Gt/century, similar to the contemporary (2000 to 2018 CE) value of ca. 6100 Gt/century. Simulations of future southwestern GrIS mass loss following Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenarios corresponding to the lowest (RCP2.6) and highest (RCP8.5) greenhouse gas concentrations range from 8800 to 35,900 Gt/century. These rates of GrIS mass loss exceed the maximum rates over the past 12,000 years, and because they scale linearly with the GrIS as a whole, our results indicate, with high confidence, that the GrIS mass loss rate will exceed Holocene values this century.