



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Press Release: UArctic Moving Forward in Tromsø

14.06.2012: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Council of the University of the Arctic (UArctic) has concluded its 15th meeting, this year hosted by the University of Tromsø. The main message from the meeting is how UArctic is moving ahead to its next phase through the development of a new Strategic Plan 2020. Council representatives from over sixty member institutions engaged in discussions that helped focus UArctic's strategic direction for the coming years. The membership will continue to be engaged on the development of UArctic's Strategic Plan 2020 over the coming months, and it will be presented to Council at their next meeting at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2013 prior to final approval by the Board of Governors.

The Council meeting is the annual general assembly of the UArctic network, bringing together representatives of universities, colleges, and other organizations that are committed to higher education and research in the North. During the meeting, the Council took key decisions about the University of the Arctic's future development, including welcoming of additional institutions and organizations as Council members, bringing UArctic's total membership to 145.

The meeting also welcomed three new Thematic Networks to UArctic. Thematic Networks foster issues-based cooperation within partnerships of UArctic members. They form a natural framework for development of UArctic education and research providing an optimal structure for increasing the knowledge generation and sharing across the North. The new networks include themes of Communicating Arctic Research; Geology; Polar ice, climate and land dynamics (PICD); and Arctic Extractive Industries. The Council also renewed the mandate and membership of its Academic Quality Committee, and received information on how to move ahead on the issue of the creation of a UArctic Student Association.

On June 13, the Council participated in a special session on *Indigenous Methodology – A contribution to Developing Academic knowledge*, chaired by Council chair Jim McDonald. Following introductory remarks by Jelena Porsanger, Sami University College (Norway) and Bjørg Evjen of the University of Tromsø (Norway), the session featured a panel discussion highlighting various approaches to indigenous methodology from cases around the Circumpolar North.

Vice-Chair of the University of the Arctic's Board of Governors, Lasse Lønnum, also University Director of the University of Tromsø, notes that he is very pleased with the direction in which the University of the Arctic is moving. "The Board is very pleased with how far UArctic has come in its first decade, and as we move towards a new Strategic Plan we are confident that the organization can lay the basis for positive northern futures for the people of the region."

The Chair of the Council, Jim McDonald of the University of Northern British Columbia remarks, "The commitment and energy shown by UArctic members demonstrates that UArctic will continue to be a leader and innovator in circumpolar education, and a strongly engaged regional actor. In particular, I was stimulated by the discussion on indigenous methodologies. It shows the strength of ideas and the willingness of our institutions embrace new approaches in education and research in partnership with northern peoples."

The next meeting of the Council of the University of the Arctic will take place at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, June 3-7, 2013. Prior to that event, the rectors, presidents and chancellors of UArctic higher education institutions will convene at the UArctic Rectors' Forum, November 13-15, 2012, at the University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Canada.

The University of the Arctic is a cooperative network of nearly 150 universities, colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the North. Our members share resources, facilities, and expertise to build post-secondary education programs that are relevant and accessible to northern students. Our overall goal is to create a strong, sustainable circumpolar region by empowering northerners and northern communities through education and shared knowledge.

We promote education that is circumpolar, interdisciplinary, and diverse in nature, and draw on our combined strengths to address the unique challenges of the region. The University of the Arctic recognizes the integral role of indigenous peoples in northern education, and seeks to engage their perspectives in all of its activities.

For more information:

Lars Kullerud
President, UArctic
+47-908-70099
lars.kullerud@uarctic.org

Outi Snellman
Vice-President Administration
+358-16-341 4210
outi.snellman@uarctic.org

UArctic International Secretariat
University of Lapland
Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland
+358-16-341 341
secretariat@uarctic.org