



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

November 2008

To Senior Arctic Officials

At the SAO meeting in Kautokeino

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) was established in 2001 based on the mandate received through the Iqaluit Declaration of 1998 where the Ministers of the Arctic Council “welcome, and are pleased to announce the establishment of the University of the Arctic, a university without walls...”.

The University of the Arctic has grown to a network of 116 Universities, Colleges, and other higher education institutions, as well as Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations, evenly distributed in the Circumpolar North. UArctic organises a comprehensive set of programs, including cooperation in the delivery of undergraduate and graduate studies, mobility, and promotion of northern education and research capabilities.

In the summer 2008 the University of the Arctic adopted a new strategic plan for the period 2008-2013. UArctic will build on three strategic focus areas, consistent with international areas of governmental priority for the Circumpolar North and reflected in the agenda of the Arctic Council.

1. Building Human Capacity in the North: culturally relevant training and education for sustainable Northern communities
2. Adaptation to Climate Change: challenges for human society as well as nature.
3. The North as an Energy region: economic, cultural, environmental, and technical opportunities, demands and impacts.

These areas are inter-related and encompass major areas of activity for UArctic member institutions and will be implemented within the established UArctic structures with a focus on cooperation using the thematic networks of UArctic.

UArctic will focus on demonstrating competency of UArctic members in Northern research and knowledge generation, including traditional knowledge. Emphasis will be placed on enabling UArctic members to contribute actively to Arctic Council working groups and other relevant bodies and by this ensure increased support to the work of the Arctic Council by indigenous and other northern experts. *UArctic in its new strategy will therefore seek closer cooperation on concrete level between UArctic thematic networks and the work of Arctic Council working groups.*

UArctic is the lead for Arctic higher education cooperation in the International Polar Year. The Board of Governors of the University of the Arctic has stated that UArctic wish to take a clear responsibility to ensure the legacy of the IPY in the Area of higher education as well as in promoting our members participation in science based follow up to the Polar Year. *UArctic is therefore ready to participate in the IPY legacy initiatives together with the Arctic Council, IASC, IASSA, and SCAR as well as other Arctic Research and Observation Initiatives.*

Currently, the majority of UArctic activities are carried out by our members and those members cover the majority of costs. External UArctic support is essential and is provided by several member states of the Arctic Council and other organisations. To ensure continued dynamic growth in the activities of the UArctic network the UArctic Board has decided to establish a UArctic Foundation that can be used to receive funding from charitable foundations and the private sector.

The success of the UArctic Foundation will remain closely linked to a clear mandate and that it is endorsed by the Arctic Council member states. *UArctic therefore respectfully calls for the unequivocal endorsement of Arctic Council members in terms of strong supportive language for the UArctic Foundation in the upcoming Arctic Council Ministerial declaration.*

UArctic request the SAO’s attention to the above concrete areas of cooperation and request for support when they prepare for the Arctic Council Ministerial declaration as well as in the preparation of further Arctic Council Initiatives.

Attachment: Strategic plan



UArctic is endorsed by the
International Polar Year (IPY)

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