

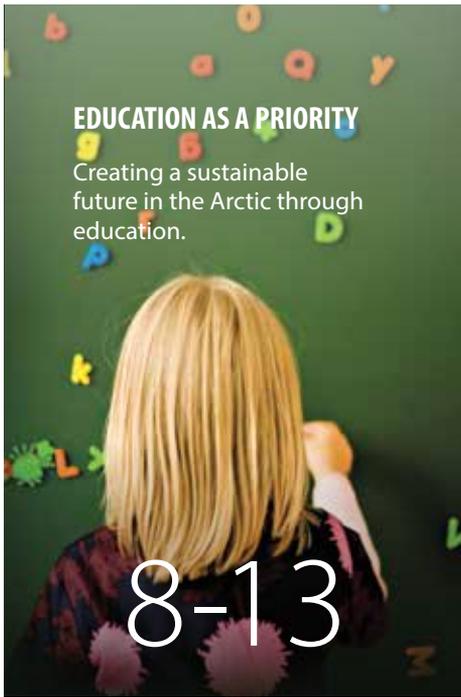
The UArctic Magazine

# SHARED VOICES

2017



UArctic



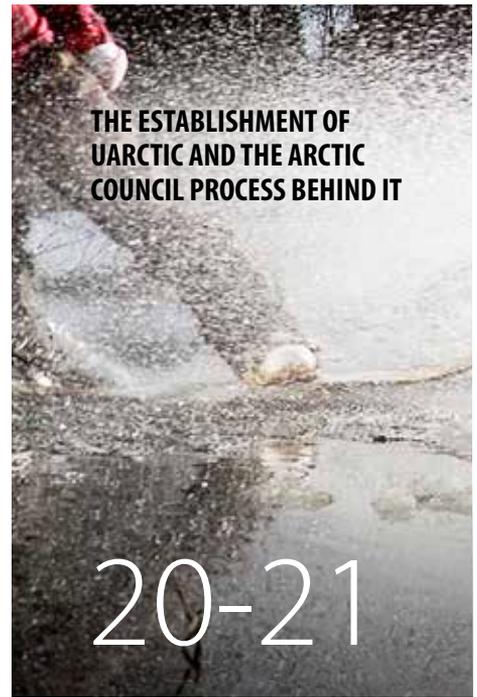
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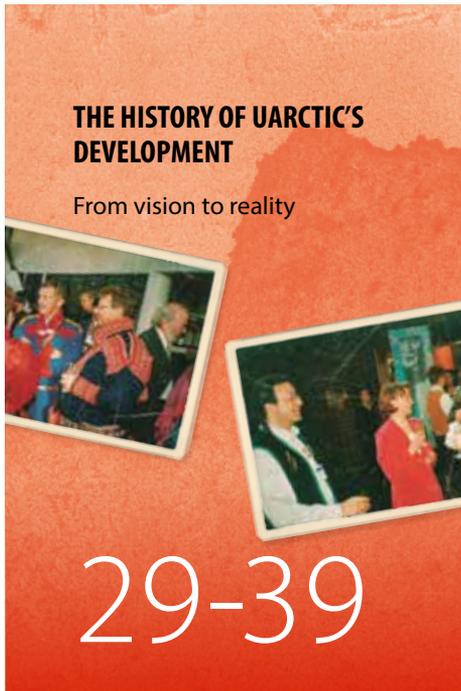
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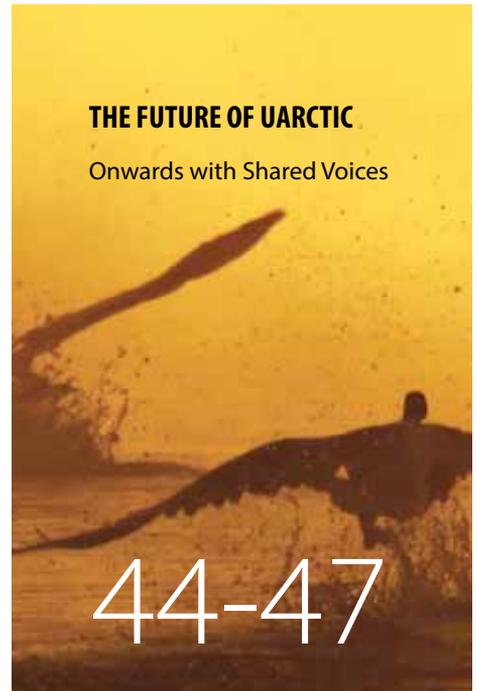
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EDITORIAL

## 20 Years of UArctic

By **OUTI SNELLMAN**, Vice-President Organization, UArctic

**T**his year marks twenty years since the birth of the idea of the University of the Arctic, and the beginning of the process that created it.

The initial thought was to link shared infrastructure and have joint education programs between a handful of organizations in the Circumpolar North. Nobody could have imagined that in twenty years since the idea, and sixteen years after its launch, UArctic would have grown into a huge membership organization with almost 200 members in nearly twenty countries, and activities in over forty Thematic Networks.

The idea of UArctic did not arise from nowhere. It was made possible by a pivotal moment ten years earlier: a speech in Murmansk by Mikhail Gorbachev. In October 1987, he called for the Arctic to be a region of peace and cooperation. Even in the last years of the Cold War, the governments of the eight Arctic states as well as scientists and universities had been looking for ways to cooperate across the borders in the Arctic region. The Murmansk Speech opened the door to the possibility of real Arctic cooperation.

As we celebrate the twenty years since the idea of UArctic in this magazine, we wish to recognize and pay tribute to the various organizations and individuals that took the concept and worked to establish the Arctic as a zone of peace through education and research. The AEPS, CUA, AMAP, IASC, IASSA and ACUNS formed the alphabet soup of circumpolar cooperation, and each has had a strong role in the creation of UArctic.

Photo Minna Pakkanen / Valokuvaamo Kipinä

**“UARctic has a strong role to play in ensuring that the Arctic can continue to be a region of peace and cooperation.”**

The Arctic Council, itself an outcome of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy process, provided the cooperative framework that created UArctic. This year Finland becomes the chair of the Arctic Council and has chosen to implement one of the priorities of its chairmanship program – education – together with UArctic. UArctic has a strong role to play in ensuring that the Arctic can continue to be a region of peace and cooperation.

I vividly remember receiving a phone call from the UK to our summer cottage in Finnish Lapland in the summer of 1997. It was Professor Bill Heal from the University of Edinburgh. He had been invited by the Arctic governments to develop the idea for an “Arctic university.” He was extremely enthusiastic about it in both content and structure, but did not quite know how to proceed technically. Someone had told him that perhaps he should call me for advice. I am so glad that I had the good sense to answer that call; I would not have missed this ride for anything.

As an investment in human capacity, education is the key component in any effort to create a sustainable future for the North and the globe. UArctic was supposed to have been impossible – some would say the same about peace. Today, most would agree on the need for both.



The biennial UArctic Congress assembles key UArctic meetings and a science conference into one single gathering. The UArctic Congress 2018 will begin in Oulu from September 3-6, and conclude in Helsinki on September 7.

The UArctic Congress 2018 is part of Finland's Arctic Council chairmanship program, and open to the public. The event will highlight the themes and priorities of the Finnish chairmanship (environmental protection, connectivity, environmental cooperation, education), including the goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UArctic Congress 2018 will feature Science and Meeting sections, including:

- Sessions aligned with the four priorities of Finland's chairmanship
- Acclaimed keynote speakers and scientific experts presenting their views and latest research
- Meetings of the Council of UArctic, the Rectors' Forum, and Thematic Networks & UArctic Institutes Leadership Team
- A UArctic Student Forum with workshops
- Various side-meetings and events
- An exciting cultural and social program

The UArctic Congress brings together institutional leaders, indigenous representatives, academics, scientists and students from around the Circumpolar North and beyond. It is an excellent platform for all UArctic members to engage with each other and promote cooperation in circumpolar science and higher education. Together with partners, policy makers and other actors, the UArctic Congress strives to take the Arctic agenda forward by creating and strengthening collaborations that produce new findings and solutions for the future of the Arctic.

# Letter from the President

By **LARS KULLERUD**  
President, UArctic

**U**Arctic emerged at a time when there was a commitment to develop the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation.

During the first decade, interest in the Arctic was limited to a small crowd, while in the recent years the Arctic has awoken as a region of global significance and interest. This is due to changing geopolitics, renewed economic interests, melting sea ice, and persistent awareness-raising by the Arctic community; the governments, the indigenous peoples' organizations, and the academia.

Over the past twenty years UArctic has developed from an idea to reality. It has proven its ability to grow and become a recognized actor in the Arctic arena. But UArctic as it is today is also a reality that is quite different from how many envisioned it twenty years ago. UArctic has developed into a network of institutions and not a university in itself. It is a tool that stimulates, facilitates and fosters collaboration in Arctic research and education, but does not teach or carry out research itself. Our results and impacts are therefore the sum of what our members do. UArctic, being a child of the Arctic Council, is also an instrument for its members to be part of the greater process of Arctic development. Finland's recognition of education as one of the key priority areas of its Arctic Council chairmanship is testament to our work in this area. This role is impossible for any of the members to fill alone. As an umbrella organization, UArctic is a unique tool to promote its members' collective capabilities.

New technologies and ways of working have allowed UArctic to develop without new physical buildings or a staff-intensive central administration, which is so common in other organizations. As a distributed organization, primarily funded and implemented by members around the Arctic, UArctic provides a robust, lean, and modern way of organising collaborative work, which is also flexible to change and growth.

From its onset, UArctic was as an initiative with concrete deliverables: the north2north mobility program and the shared Circumpolar Studies undergraduate program. Both addressed core needs for northern collaboration and development. The UArctic Thematic Networks and UArctic Institutes are now the natural home for issues-based education and research collaboration within our network. The establishment of Thematic Networks represents a milestone in Arctic cooperation as it gives room for a very flexible and adaptable way to respond to needs. A priority for the future is to further strengthen them as the leading tools for our members to jointly address the core needs of the Arctic. Only through collaboration will it be possible to deliver high quality and relevant education, training and research for, by and about the North.

The new binding agreement on science cooperation between the eight Arctic states has the potential to become an important tool in supporting collaboration among UArctic members, in particular the work of the UArctic Thematic Networks and UArctic Institutes. The well-established partnership between UArctic, IASC and IASSA and our similarly strong partnership with the Arctic indigenous peoples' Permanent Participant organizations ensures a strong circumpolar research agenda that respects the needs and views of northern peoples.

UArctic looks forward to increased collaboration with the Arctic Council, especially in addressing educational priorities, and further strengthening our partnership with its working groups and observers. Our new partnership with the Arctic Economic Council opens the arena for improved academic and private sector collaboration that can foster the innovation and development needed in the future of the Arctic.

While the major players in Arctic science have been able to form shared spaces for collaboration, it is time to do the same in the area of mobility and exchange of students and faculty. Such a framework will ensure better use of resources, be able to identify and support groups that are underserved by current structures, and create a shared understanding across the Circumpolar North.

Today we see students who took part in the early UArctic activities like north2north and Circumpolar Studies emerging as leaders in academia and the public and private sectors throughout the Circumpolar North. It is time to build a community for these northern experts who share common insights, values and dreams for a promising North in decades to come.



Photo Ari Andersin / Vastavalo.net



## UARCTIC COMMUNITY – A HOME FOR THOSE ‘UARCTIC AT HEART’

Many activities of UArctic and our members, such as field schools, joint degree programs, student exchanges, conferences and meetings, see an extensive number of students, educators, politicians, business people and other stakeholders as participants. Some of these activities have their own networks of past participants, but they are not connected to each other as a whole and may have challenges with sustainability.

This collective is a valuable resource with tremendous potential to have a positive impact in the North today and tomorrow. Our aim is to capture these highly knowledgeable and motivated individuals by creating a meaningful home for them and offering opportunities to engage in Arctic issues.

The UArctic Community is a new initiative which will bring together those ‘UArctic at heart’; people who have some UArctic history, connections or experiences, and who feel like they belong to the bigger UArctic family. We start small, and our aim is to expand the ways to engage and communicate with the entire Community as we grow. Ideas for the future include enabling networking among the Community members, showcasing their work in the North, and providing exclusive access to events.

# EDUCATION

## *AS A PRIORITY IN ARCTIC COOPERATION*

By **ALEKSI HÄRKÖNEN**  
Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, Ambassador for  
Arctic Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

**T**he eight Arctic countries and the six indigenous Permanent Participants have celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arctic Council, and for a good reason. There are quite a few achievements to highlight: two binding agreements on search and rescue and oil pollution preparedness in force; a binding agreement on scientific cooperation just signed between the Arctic countries; and contributions towards Arctic-specific legal instruments, such as the IMO Polar Code, and important global instruments like the Paris Climate Agreement.

All activities of the Arctic Council are based on sound scientific research and globally recognized assessments regarding Arctic nature, sea areas and human development. The University of the Arctic is intimately involved in this ongoing scientific work.

Finland will have a special role in Arctic cooperation as the chair of the Arctic Council in 2017-2019. We identified two broad frameworks that cover the essential tasks for Arctic cooperation. They are climate change – mitigation, adaptation and building resilience – and sustainable development, utilizing the goals set in the United Nations Agenda 2030.

In preparing our chairmanship we also approached UArctic on a theme that we thought should be emphasized more directly in the Arctic Council: education. We got the full support of the network and valuable suggestions as to what should be done. Providing good basic education to all children in the Arctic is sustainable development at its best. It opens the door to learning trades and to higher education, and to finding a place in working life. It also lessens the risk of marginalization with its unfortunate consequences.

**“Providing good basic education to all children in the Arctic is sustainable development at its best.”**

The Arctic is changing rapidly, and we should be prepared to address the needs that come with the changing circumstances. Human activities will increase, and along with the challenges there will also be opportunities. The local populations should be fully involved. They should be the beneficiaries of new economic opportunities. We should be clear about the overall goal: the Arctic should remain safe and prosperous, especially for those who live here now.



Photo Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Covering labour needs by bringing people from outside the Arctic and then taking them back does not amount to sustainable development. Providing equal education opportunities in the Arctic is the key.

We already have the technical means to overcome difficulties caused by the great distances in our sparsely populated northern areas. We have accumulated the expertise to meet the challenges posed by minority languages. We should share experiences in e-learning more efficiently, and provide support and encouragement to the teachers who are involved in educating the children in the Arctic.

We are pleased that the second UArctic Congress will be held in Finland in 2018 and look forward to a fruitful period of cooperation. We hope that the teachers' and educators' Thematic Network of UArctic will be further strengthened by this. Another opportunity to emphasize education during Finland's chairmanship is the Model Arctic Council which brings together students and universities in identifying essential issues in Arctic cooperation. The next Model Arctic Council will also be held in Finland, and it is our sincere wish that the bright young participants will not only simulate the ongoing activities in the Arctic Council but also contribute with their critical insights and views. We often speak of students as future leaders, but in the Arctic the future may be closer than we think.

Education as a priority in Arctic cooperation is a natural theme for Finland. We have accumulated experience in providing good education to all children throughout the country. The Sámi communities in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia are actively cooperating and developing new teaching methods.

The University of the Arctic is an indispensable part of Arctic cooperation, and Finland wants it recognized as a close partner of the Arctic Council.

## MARIE SØNDERGAARD

It all began at a lecture in Aarhus. I was told that there was a course about Greenland and that they were going to learn about Thule Air Base. I was born and raised in Greenland and I worked at the base for over two years, so no wonder I found it interesting – I had to attend the lecture. Sitting there without being prepared, yet understanding everything, is not something that happens to me often. That's when I realized that I had to study something within the Arctic.

One thought led to another, and I soon found myself in Tromsø on an exchange, attending courses focusing on Arctic aspects of Norway. Living in Tromsø means beautiful nature, snow, cold weather, hiking and dressing practically. All these things felt very natural to me. I was home! Even the dark winter period was the perfect excuse to stay indoors and play board games.

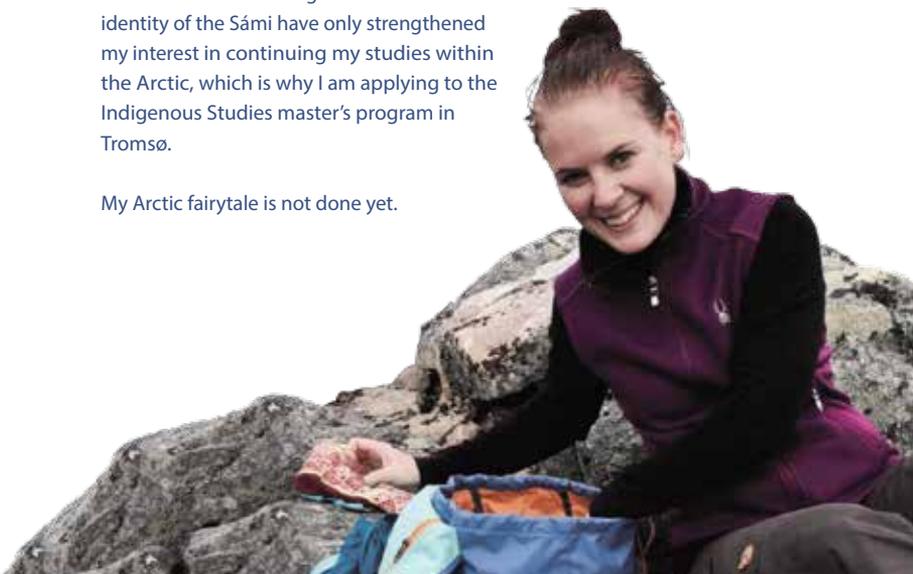
My journey was not done after my exchange: it continued in Rovaniemi, Finland where I was an intern at the UArctic Secretariat at the University of Lapland until March 2017. The internship was a great experience, personally as well as educationally. It was also a challenge, resisting all the interesting courses, conferences and other exciting meetings that I constantly faced through my work. The internship provided a great deal of independence, as I worked with different tasks by myself, and I also got to work with what interests me.

I experienced the surroundings and how Lapland's nature works in the local science centres Arktikum and Pilke, skiing resorts like Pyhä, Levi and Ounasvaara, and many other places with their beautiful and unique landscapes. Finland is very flat, so the view you have from the top of a skiing resort is amazing. Walking through snow every day was another part of my experience which I enjoyed, and even though the spring had not yet arrived when I left, the days were already longer and full of sunshine reflecting from the snow.

During my internship I also worked on my bachelor's thesis on the Finnish Sámi identity. Doing that while being in Finland was quite interesting, because the debate about this subject is not over. Meeting scholars who participate in the debate had an impact on me and only made me find the subject even more interesting. There is no doubt that the internship has given me a broader view on the possibilities that we as students have in expressing, learning and developing our interest in the Arctic.

Studying the Arctic in Tromsø, doing my internship in Rovaniemi and having written about the identity of the Sámi have only strengthened my interest in continuing my studies within the Arctic, which is why I am applying to the Indigenous Studies master's program in Tromsø.

My Arctic fairytale is not done yet.





*Nordic Higher Education Collaboration:*

# ARCTIC TEACHERS

## as Creators of a Sustainable Future

By **TUIJA TURUNEN**, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Lapland

**T**he sustainable development of the Arctic requires teachers who have a special relationship with the Arctic environment and the communities where they work. Teachers are essential stakeholders in a sustainable circumpolar future: they have the young generation in their hands.

Teachers can inspire, build resilience and open up new perspectives on living in and working for the Arctic. A good teacher sees potential in every student they work with. It is essential that teachers working with Arctic children and youth are committed to the region and the communities they work with, and also see their professional work as key in their students' future.

**“Attracting committed, high-performing teachers is one of the key professional issues in the Arctic.”**

The UArctic Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education, established in 2015, aims to share understanding and knowledge about the special features of the Arctic teaching profession and on how to best educate future teachers for careers in the North. Currently, the network consists of 19 educational institutions, half of them Nordic, working in the fields of teacher education and indigenous education. The network activities so far have included face-to-face symposia,

online seminars, shared teaching activities and conference presentations. The future plans include shared research activities named “Seeing Education with the Northern Eyes.” A long-term goal is to develop a virtual research and resource centre for high-quality teacher education research and practice.

Teacher education has a specific societal task in Nordic communities. Education should provide equal opportunities for a good life. Qualified workers and future experts do not exist without inspiring teachers and quality education. Moreover, there is strong research evidence that education is the key to well-being and social sustainability. The opposite also applies: lack of education potentially leads to marginalization and even radicalization. Thus, attracting committed, high-performing teachers is one of the key professional issues in the Arctic territories. When successful, teachers educate the next generation to be willing and capable to work for the Arctic in the Arctic, and to do so proudly.

The importance of teacher education has been noticed also at the governmental level. Finland chairs the Arctic Council starting May 2017, and one of the main themes of the Finnish chairmanship is education. Moreover, the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) approved the initiative of the Thematic Network called “Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic” as a new project in their meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska in February 2017. Finland, Canada, Norway and Russia will co-lead the project. This is a great opportunity to extend the societal impact of the Thematic Network, interact with policy makers, and create a better future for Arctic children, youth and communities.

Arctic Children:  
**PRESCHOOL  
EDUCATION**  
*and*  
**SMOOTH  
transition  
to School**

By **ANNA POLEZHAEVA**, Head, Protocol and International Cooperation  
Department, Federal Agency for Nationality Affairs, Russian Federation

In view of globalization and the changing environment, it is obvious that the current condition of indigenous education evokes profound concern and challenging constraints. Among its critical gaps are the rates of enrollment and student retention, low levels of performance and the completion of basic education.

Indigenous educational deficiencies range from general exclusion to limited access to upper levels of education, with admittance to higher education still being exceptional. With the lack of access to basic services due to geographical isolation, nomadic children face severe issues with obtaining knowledge and skills necessary for living in the modern world.

Another major shortcoming is that formal school systems rarely reflect the realities of indigenous livelihoods, traditional educational systems and local cultures. Most textbooks and other educational materials reflect the values, norms and traditions of the mainstream society. Formal school education is provided mainly in the national language. School terms and daily schedules do not take indigenous peoples' livelihoods into consideration. Most non-indigenous

## **“The project strives to build knowledge and develop skills needed to maintain vibrant communities in the changing Arctic.”**

teachers are not prepared to teach in indigenous communities. Elders and community members are not involved in setting the direction or educational goals of the schools.

The project “Arctic Children: Preschool Education and Smooth Transition to School” aims to promote the sustainable development of indigenous peoples, and their integration into the modern society while maintaining their traditional ways of life. Corresponding with the Arctic Council SDWG priorities – the social aspect of sustainable development – the project strives to build knowledge and develop skills needed to maintain vibrant communities in the changing Arctic. Finland is the co-leader of the project.

The main objectives of the first stages of the project are 1) the evaluation and assessment of the best practices in the sphere of free preschool education for indigenous children in the North (Arctic and Subarctic); 2) providing traditional knowledge about national history, culture, native and national languages, and traditional economic activities; and 3) arranging the exchange

of information with stakeholders on a regular basis, with the aim to share best practices in preschool education programs, and projects oriented towards a smooth transition of children from preschool to elementary school. The project will also facilitate the drafting of educational programs and teaching materials for preschool education of indigenous children. Another goal is the creation of professional development courses for students (future teachers) and acting school teachers in order to provide necessary skills and knowledge to get acquainted with the special characteristics of the northern environment, as well as the culture and ways of life of indigenous peoples.

This practice will create a unique educational program that may be used by other interested Arctic Council member states in order to increase culturally appropriate teaching practices. We believe that the implementation of this project will contribute to the integration of the indigenous children in the modern society, as well as the preservation of their culture and language.

# *Circumpolar Universities Association: Communication and Collaboration Between the Peripheral Areas of the North*

By **ESKO RIEPULA**, Former Rector, University of Lapland

**S**tarting with the University of Oulu in 1958, the first universities began to appear in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Norway. Their aim was to serve the people of these regions through research and teaching, and to promote comprehensive development of the northern parts of the countries. In short, the universities were founded in and for the regions in which they were located.

This was also the beginning of higher education collaboration in the North Calotte, which culminated in the establishment of the Cooperation Commission of the North Calotte Universities and Colleges in 1972. The University College of Lapland (now the University of Lapland) joined the Commission in 1980, and as its rector I was actively involved in the Commission. The meetings were an excellent way to receive updates on higher education and research activities in the Nordic countries, especially on student and faculty mobility and developing research that was relevant for the North Calotte.

Gorbachev's famous 1987 Murmansk speech and its implications for Arctic collaboration also sparked new ideas in higher education. For many northern universities the natural direction for collaboration had been the South. There was one clear exception though: the North Calotte higher education cooperation. On an August day in 1988, Geoffrey Weller and Douglas C. Nord from Lakehead University appeared in Rovaniemi and wanted to meet me. They had an idea of creating a cooperative university network that would span the whole circumpolar region from North America to Russia and beyond. Weller and Nord were visiting universities in the region to share the idea with them, and they now wanted my opinion. I was of course excited and introduced our North Calotte cooperation to them. We agreed that more cross-border collaboration was needed also east-west and vice versa, not just north-south.

One year later, in November 1989, the first circumpolar universities' cooperation conference was organized at Lakehead University with 150 participants from about 50 universities throughout the region. At the third conference in Rovaniemi

in 1992 the cooperation was formalized and rules put in place. The Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) was born, and its Secretariat established at the University of Lapland.

The CUA had familiar aims: to encourage cooperation, to promote higher education and research in northern areas, and to assess and promote the status and role of circumpolar universities in regional development work. In that capacity, it proved to be an excellent and effective body for cooperation, and a forum for the exchange of information, experiences and research findings. However, the increased interest in the North and the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996 brought along an even broader idea of an 'Arctic university'. With Bill Heal and David Stone as the spokespeople, a proposal went forward to the Arctic Council in early 1997. Both I and Outi Snellman, CUA's Secretary General, were of the opinion that there was no point in establishing a competing organization to the CUA; instead, the activities of the two should be combined. Soon after, the CUA was commissioned to prepare a feasibility study on the initiative. The resulting recommendation was that the University of the Arctic should be established, and in 1998 the proposal was accepted and put into motion. In 2001, UArctic was officially launched, and the activities of the CUA merged into it.

In just four decades, the collaboration between northern universities and colleges has developed from smaller North Calotte cooperation into covering the entire circumpolar region. Of all higher education collaboration in the North, UArctic has proven to be the most enduring.





## SCOTT FORREST

Exactly twenty years ago, in September 1996, I began my Master's in international studies at the University of Northern British Columbia, focusing on the Circumpolar North. At that same moment across the country in Ottawa, the inaugural meeting of the Arctic Council was taking place. Meanwhile a radical idea for a northern student exchange program was being beamed between fax machines in Whitehorse and Rovaniemi. I could not have known at that moment how significantly these events would be linked to my own circumpolar journey.

UNBC opened up northern possibilities to me in the realm of international relations – both in study and practice – after being told numerous times in my undergraduate classes that there was nothing going on in the Arctic and that it was not worth studying. Twenty years later, that seems like a ridiculous notion, but in some ways the ‘circumpolar world’ in 1996 was just lines on a map. It would take the person-to-person, institution-to-institution, people-to-people and country-to-country interaction and cooperation of the next twenty years to create a new generation that thought of themselves as citizens with a circumpolar identity, belonging to a common region. One of the first steps in creating that region – and for my own circumpolar identity – was the Northern Consortium Student Mobility program.

Outi Snellman of the University of Lapland and the late Aron Senkpiel of Yukon College had the idea to create a pilot mobility program between Canada's three northern colleges, plus UNBC, and a small number of universities in northern Europe. When I discovered the possibility of going abroad, I knew precisely where I wanted to go: Rovaniemi. For a student of northern politics, despite being a small city on the Arctic Circle, Rovaniemi was a hub. The birthplace of the Rovaniemi process. Home of the Arctic Centre and the University of Lapland (and Santa Claus, as I would later find out).

I was supposed to stay for four months. But one day early in my exchange I walked into Outi Snellman's office, and she asked if I would be interested in helping her out with a little project that she was working on – the University of the Arctic. Twenty years later, I'm still here and still working with Outi on that little project.

Finland and Canada have been instrumental in making UArctic a reality, and creating new education opportunities for students across the Circumpolar North. Our earliest programs like the Circumpolar Studies curriculum and the north2north student exchange have strong Finnish-Canadian DNA in their core. That cooperation continues today, with strong participation by higher education institutions and political support in both countries.

Like the Arctic Council, where the idea for an Arctic university was first proposed, UArctic has been instrumental in building the circumpolar world that we know today. The best parts of our current Arctic cooperation reflect shared values that I recognize from both my home nation of Canada and my adopted nation of Finland: respect for the environment and sustainability, a key role for indigenous peoples, building dialogue and reaching decisions through consensus, and maintaining peace and stability. I am happy and proud to have been able to play a part by not just studying Arctic cooperation but actively shaping it.

*This article was first published in "Canada – Finland. Celebrating 2017", a commemorative book celebrating Finland's 100 years of independence and Canada's 150 years as a nation. (Publisher: Finnish-Canadian Society and Embassy of Canada to Finland)*



# The Arctic Heritage – A Contribution from IASC to Developing a Broad Arctic Cooperation

By **ODD R. ROGNE**, Former Executive Director, IASC

**C**ooperation in Arctic science has usually preceded other forms of Arctic cooperation, possibly because political implications were less controversial, or because it served as a more neutral testing ground as compared to governmental cooperation.

The Cold War acted as a barrier to broader collaboration, even if some limited cooperation took place. However, we smelled a change when we learned about concepts such as *glasnost* and *perestroika*, followed by Soviet invitations to bilateral cooperation in the North.

Oddly enough, the first informal discussions started in the South. As most of the countries engaged in Arctic research were members of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the first contacts were initiated through this network in 1986. It was agreed that discussions should be started by Arctic countries, as the Arctic area was still very sensitive. At that time, Arctic rim nations was the term used, so communication with them was started with a view to broaden the cooperation to all countries with a land area north of the Arctic Circle.

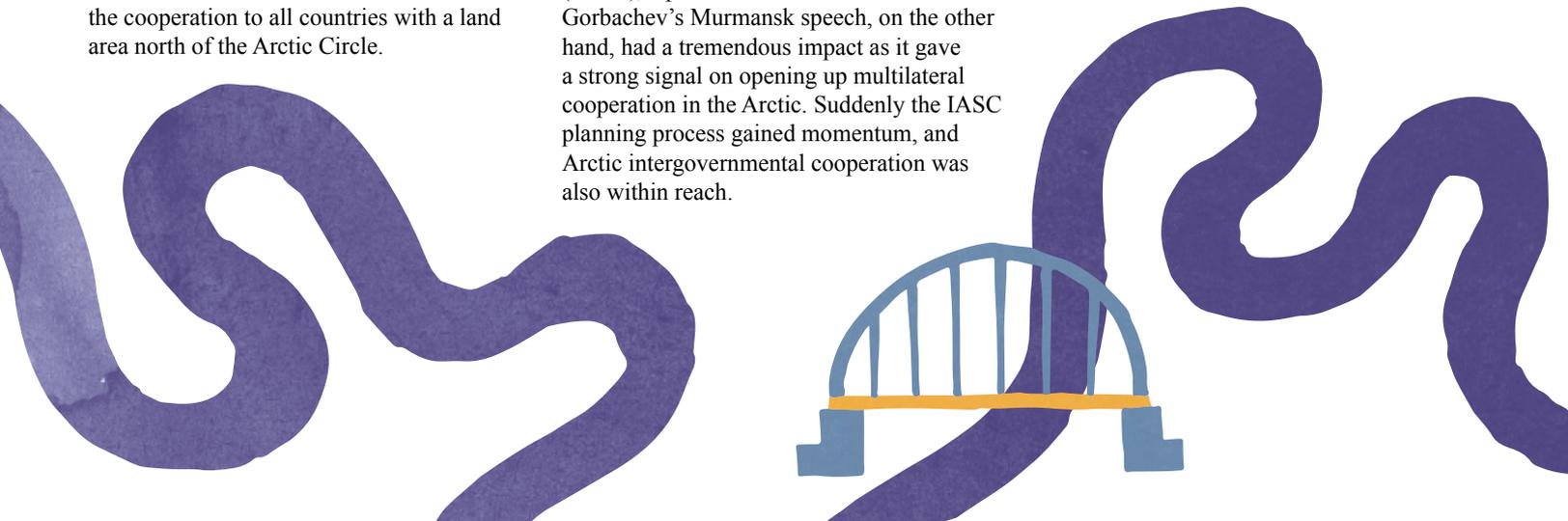
We had a simple working vision: the organization should cover all the Arctic and all areas of science. With those big ambitions, we started corresponding with a number of people and drafting some of our ideas. At the first International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) planning meeting, held in Oslo in February 1987, a small working group – myself, Fred Roots and Jørgen Taagholt – was appointed to elaborate on the ideas presented at the meeting as well as those drafted earlier. The outcome “International Communication and Co-ordination in Arctic Science: A Proposal for Action” was a comprehensive report on the need for an organization like IASC and how to create an entity that would meet those needs. It also drew attention to ‘an intergovernmental forum on Arctic science issues’.

Two outside events had a strong impact on further IASC planning, namely the Finnish Initiative and a speech by Gorbachev in Murmansk. The roots of the Finnish Initiative can be found in the discussions over the location of the IASC Secretariat. This initiative led to the founding of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), a precursor of the Arctic Council. Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech, on the other hand, had a tremendous impact as it gave a strong signal on opening up multilateral cooperation in the Arctic. Suddenly the IASC planning process gained momentum, and Arctic intergovernmental cooperation was also within reach.

After more than three years of discussions and planning, IASC was founded in 1990. It has been called the ‘John the Baptist’ of international Arctic cooperation. Clearly, IASC pointed the way for international science cooperation in the Arctic. Furthermore, the IASC planning process pointed to the need for governmental contacts (‘intergovernmental forum’) which materialized through AEPS and later the Arctic Council.

*For historical accounts and documents of the 25-year history of IASC, visit [iasc25.iasc.info](http://iasc25.iasc.info)*

**“We had a simple working vision: the organization should cover all the Arctic and all areas of science.”**



# Maintaining Dialogue and Building Capacity— IASC in the Future

By **SUSAN BARR**, President, IASC and **LARRY HINZMAN**, Vice President, IASC

**A** primary function of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) has always been to help researchers to identify the strategic priorities and the collaborative investments required to address the gaps in our understanding of the Arctic.

IASC has not set the agenda for research priorities, but has concentrated on setting the table for discussions where scientists may share their discoveries, achievements, data, and their perceptions of the challenges on the horizon. No single country is able to support the breadth and depth of research necessary to keep pace with the changing Arctic. Therefore it is necessary and prudent to gather researchers and key stakeholders from around the Arctic and the world, so that we together may make greater scientific advances, more informed decisions, and better use of limited research and planning resources. The annual Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) and the decadal International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) are essential venues to

**“The best investment in the future of Arctic science is through capacity building of early career scientists.”**

create and maintain the open dialogue that is critical for international cooperation and collaborations.

The ASSW provides a forum for individuals and organizations with an interest in Arctic science to meet and coordinate programs, expeditions, scientific cruises and shared use of remote research stations. Each year such international partnerships seem to rise as the consequences of the rapid changes in the Arctic environment, social and civil structures become more imperative, and threats to cultural heritage intensify. Investments in Arctic research funding from national sources must compete against many other legitimate needs; yet the value of research in the Arctic is well justified. The role of the Arctic in global climate dynamics is now well proven, but still not fully understood. Additionally, as sea ice diminishes and access improves, interests in developing business opportunities are expanding. In general, communities, which are anxious to enhance local economies, welcome potential business developments. Research conducted by Arctic scientists contributes to greater understanding of local conditions and possible threats to stable development, thus quantifying and reducing risks to investments.

IASC believes that the best investment in the future of Arctic science is through capacity building of early career scientists. Through the IASC Fellowship program, we have identified many promising young researchers and helped them become more engaged and established in Arctic programs. We believe that by giving them leadership roles early in their careers, we can help them to establish the personal relationships and social networks needed to launch a

successful career. It is our hope that through this fellowship program we can help the best and brightest young scientists remain in Arctic science.

Perhaps the best way to envision the future role of IASC is to look at our past. As we have already proven many times, coordination and collaboration among researchers, funding agencies and scientific organizations leads to greater achievements for all, enhanced well-being for Arctic residents and greater understanding of this important part of our planet.



# IASSA

## *Giving Voice to Arctic Social Sciences*

By **PETER SKÖLD**, Director, Arctic Research Centre, Umeå University  
and **FLORIAN STAMMLER**, Research Professor, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

**T**he International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA) was founded in 1990 in Fairbanks, Alaska at a meeting held in conjunction with the 7th Inuit Studies Conference.

The creation of IASSA followed the suggestion to establish an international association to represent Arctic social scientists, made at the Conference on Coordination of Research in the Arctic held in Leningrad in 1988.

Since its establishment, IASSA has promoted the participation of social scientists in national and international Arctic research. It stimulates international cooperation, and promotes mutual respect, communication and collaboration between social scientists and northern people. IASSA also supports knowledge creation through promoting the active collection, exchange, dissemination and archiving of scientific information in the Arctic social sciences, as well as through facilitating culturally, developmentally and linguistically appropriate education in the North.

Every three years IASSA organizes the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS), hosted by the institution which houses the rotating IASSA Secretariat. In 2014-2017 the host was Umeå University, with the ninth ICASS organized in June 2017. "ICASS is a highly important conference for researchers within Arctic social sciences, humanities and health," says Peter Sköld, former IASSA President and director of the Arctic Research Centre (ARCUM) at Umeå University. "The theme of ICASS IX – People and Place – illustrates the ambition to promote an understanding of the Arctic as a region with small and large communities, and over four million people of whom 10-15% are indigenous."

In just a few years, IASSA will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the Arctic's role on the global stage is only increasing. The challenges for northern communities, regions and states in the coming years will be even greater in light of rapid changes in the environmental, economic and security situations of the North. Collective efforts and open communication and collaboration are essential in facing them.

"IASSA's community and its importance has rapidly grown in the recent past. We have every reason to believe that this process will continue with the increased attention to the Arctic," says Florian Stammer, IASSA Council member and research professor at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland. "Considering IASSA's extensive network of partnerships and memorandums of understanding with other Arctic organizations, we expect that in the future there will be even more concerted and coordinated efforts together with our partners to give a stronger voice to Arctic experts in shaping the future of the Arctic. Working together on the most pressing issues with governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and private businesses can help to ensure that the voice of researchers and Arctic societies will be heard before important decisions are made concerning people in the Arctic."



## NIKOLAS SELLHEIM

Who would have guessed that one decision ten years ago was going to have such a long-lasting effect and take me to the place where I am now: an office on the slopes of Mount Rokko with a stunning view over the Bay of Osaka. I am currently doing my postdoc at the Polar Cooperation Research Centre (PCRC), which is part of the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies (GSICS), Kobe University. Yes, a former UArctic student is sitting in Japan! And that would not have happened without UArctic.

But let me go back ten years to the life-changing day in May. At that time I was in my second semester of Scandinavian Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. It was a sunny day and during a class, the subject of which I don't remember, I spent more time on playing around with my newly acquired laptop than listening to the subject matter. To be fair, I googled Master's programs dealing with issues in the High North, because it was the Arctic and not necessarily southern Scandinavian issues that fascinated me. During that Google search I stumbled across the Arctic Studies Program (ASP) at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi. That sounded so cool! So 'Arctic' that I immediately needed more info! Sure, it was not a Master's program but rather a two-semester undergraduate program, but I knew, I somehow felt, that I had to apply. Unfortunately the application deadline had already passed, so I thought my opportunity for the year 2007 had passed with it... But the urge to apply prevailed, and I contacted the program coordinator anyway. Luckily I was still able to send my documents, and about two weeks later I received the confirmation: I had been accepted! Just a few months later, in August, I flew to Rovaniemi – obviously for the first time in my life – and upon my arrival in that beautiful northern town my gut told me that here lies my future.

And how right I was. I remember the tears rolling down my cheeks when I had to leave Rovaniemi after the ASP. But I also remember well the joy I felt when I heard that I can continue studying Arctic issues via the online Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies (BCS) at Bodø University College (now Nord University, a UArctic member) in Bodø, Norway. I signed up, went back to Berlin, and completed my BA in Scandinavian Studies while being connected with the Arctic through the completion of the BCS.

Throughout the ASP and BCS I was in frequent contact with the staff of UArctic's International Secretariat. And I wanted to be part of that team as well. In the course of my bachelor's thesis for Berlin, which I wrote about Sámi land right issues in Finland, I travelled back to Rovaniemi in early 2009 and started to get involved with UArctic on a more systematic level. I helped out here and there and just 'hung around', so to speak. It was during that time that it really became clear that I wanted to academically and geographically stay in the Arctic. So I decided to do my master's in Polar Law at the University

of Akureyri in Iceland – yet another UArctic member. I spent one year in that lovely northern town, but my heart beat for Rovaniemi. In order to finish my Master's, I moved back to Rovaniemi to write my thesis on the Barents cooperation, including a one-month research visit to the International Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes. But of course a student needs money. While in Iceland I was able to work for the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group, and in Rovaniemi I finally worked for UArctic for a few months. Helping to organise the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2011 was one of the many tasks at hand. And truly in the sense of support for students, even though I was technically working, I was still encouraged to focus on my Master's thesis and finish it as soon as possible, which I did in the spring of 2011.

The worry of a soon-to-be-finished Master's student is, of course, what will happen next. Am I going to do a PhD? And if so, where, and how do I finance it? While discussing these issues with numerous people, it was Outi Snellman who pointed me to the soon approaching application deadline for the fully funded, four-year Legal Cultures in Transnational World (LeCTra) doctoral programme at U Lapland's law faculty. A doctorate in law? Hell, why not! I applied, I succeeded, and now I have a doctorate in law, for which I conducted a legal anthropological study on the Canadian seal hunt – yes, including a few months of ethnographic research in the hunt itself – and the European law banning all products stemming from it. Needless to say, that was quite a trip, and without UArctic and Outi Snellman that would not have happened. Besides, while working for UArctic, I also met my wife, and now we have two little kids who enrich our lives. Remember me mentioning my gut feeling of 'in Rovaniemi lies my future'? I think it seems fair to say that it was true. Although I moved away from Rovaniemi during my PhD to live in southern Finland with my wife, I regularly showed up for seminars, courses and just to see my friends – to put it simply, to see my 'home'.

It seems to be the curse of every academic always having to decide over the next step. Look for a job? Do a post-doc? I love doing research, so I decided to apply and was accepted for a post-doc under the Japan Society for the Promotion on Science (JSPS) in Kobe. The kids are still small, and it is still possible to experience something completely different from my beloved North. My research on local communities in international law will in all likelihood take me also to the Japanese whaling villages... It seems I am attracted by the controversial.

Here I am now, looking over Osaka Bay, reminiscing about the journey that lies behind me. The journey has not ended in Japan, however, and the 'academic curse' is just a matter of a few months. All I can wish for is that the journey will take me and my family back to the Arctic Circle and to my home, the small city of Rovaniemi, where it all started.



# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UARCTIC

## *and the Arctic Council Process Behind It*

By **DAVID STONE**, Former Chair, AMAP  
and **LARS-OTTO REIERSEN**, Executive Secretary, AMAP  
and **JAN-IDAR SOLBAKKEN**, Former Saami Council Representative, AMAP

It was at a meeting of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in January 1997 in Groningen that UArctic took its initial step from idea to reality.

At this time AMAP was preparing its first reports assessing the State of the Arctic Environment for the Arctic Council. During casual conversation, Bill Heal from Durham University asked Lars-Erik Liljelund (then AMAP Vice-Chair), Lars-Otto Reiersen (AMAP Executive Secretary) and David Stone (then AMAP Chair), “What do you think about the idea of a University of the Arctic?” He described a vision for a consortium of existing universities and institutions cooperating on a circumpolar scale, capitalizing on each other’s strengths through the internet. Heal’s unbounded enthusiasm was infectious. He had an instant answer for all questions, and we saw only benefits.

The need for enhanced circumpolar education at the university level had become obvious to all in AMAP. At the time universities existed in Arctic regions of the Nordic countries, in Alaska, and in Arctic Russia. However, their external linkages were primarily towards their closest neighbours and to the south with fewer functional circumpolar connections. Degrees could not be awarded in Canada’s two higher education Arctic colleges where only a few first-year courses at a university level were available. We immediately saw how the curriculum of all participating universities and colleges could be expanded if these institutions shared course units creditable towards a degree. Benefits would be just as strong at the postgraduate level, and the ability to focus academic topics in a circumpolar context would be much enhanced. Arctic scholarship in many disciplines would be strengthened, especially those unique to the interests of Arctic residents who would have increased opportunities to pursue an education close to home. We saw a future with an Arctic that was less dependent on expertise trained exclusively in the South.

Heal despaired at the thought of sending his proposal independently around the circumpolar world. Was there a better way? Thoughts turned to the nascent Arctic Council. Heal agreed to provide Stone with a proposal for the next meeting of Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) of the Arctic Council in Kautokeino in March 1997. The aim was to secure an endorsement that could catalyze concrete action in all circumpolar countries. Meanwhile Terry Fenge and Jan-Idar Solbakken took the important step of consulting with indigenous peoples’ organizations represented in the Arctic Council. Within a few days, their support was confirmed.

It was too late to put Heal’s proposal on the agenda. Therefore it was included in Stone’s report on AMAP progress under the subtitle “A Concept Paper from Canada and Sweden for a Possible University of the Arctic”. The SAOs were intrigued but cautious. Canada, Sweden and AMAP were asked to undertake consultations and to propose planning options. The Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA), Canada, Finland and AMAP supported a small international Task Force chaired by Heal to do the work.

The most ominous reason for SAO caution was that in several Arctic countries education is not a responsibility of the national government but managed by regional governments such as provinces or states. The Arctic Council, however, is a responsibility of national governments. Finland and Sweden identified the circumpolar Ministers of Education as the key to resolving the dilemma. Outi Snellman and Stone met in Québec City prior to the October 1997 meeting of the Ministers to plan how to present the idea to them. The proposal could have suffered an early death, but Snellman successfully obtained the Ministers' support, although it took some time for this to be unequivocal in Canada and the United States.

Heal set about organizing the work of the Task Force with his familiar passion. Their report "A University of the Arctic: Turning Concept into Reality" was well received at the October 1997 SAO meeting. It was the tipping point that injected momentum into the process. Stone was authorised to send a "letter of invitation" to Snellman, asking if the CUA would prepare a feasibility study for UArctic. Snellman quickly confirmed

the CUA's readiness to undertake the work, and the Task Force was replaced by a CUA Working Group, chaired by Asgeir Brekke from the University of Tromsø. The inclusion of the two Canadian colleges in UArctic was never in doubt, probably due to the seminal contributions made at this time by Sally Ross (now Webber) and Aaron Senkpiel.

After reviewing a Working Group progress report presented by Peter Johnson and Sally Ross in May 1998, the SAO chair Mary Simon suggested that the initiative could be announced at the upcoming Arctic Council Ministerial Conference. Stone drafted language for the Conference declaration concerning the creation of UArctic. The CUA confirmed its willingness to present the Working Group report, and welcomed the proposed endorsement of the initiative at the Arctic Council Ministerial Conference on 14-16 September 1998 in Iqaluit.

Oran Young presented the report "With Shared Voices: Launching the University of the Arctic". The resulting Iqaluit Ministerial Declaration read: We "welcome, and are

pleased to announce, the establishment of a University of the Arctic, a university without walls, as proposed by a Working Group of the CUA. We note the kind offer of Finland to support the interim secretariat. We encourage the Working Group to continue its efforts to consult with northern educational and indigenous authorities and colleges. We look forward to further reports on this issue and to seeking ways to promote the success of this initiative."

In June 2001, UArctic was launched in Rovaniemi. Today there are over 170 member institutions. The vision has truly flourished and provided a new generation of graduates and postgraduates with a breadth of education and experiences quite impossible to acquire from any single institution.

# UArctic Annual Report for 2016

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, research institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North. UArctic builds and strengthens collective resources and collaborative infrastructure that enables member institutions to better serve their constituents and their regions. Through cooperation in education, research and outreach we enhance human capacity in the North, promote viable communities and sustainable economies, and forge global partnerships.



**UArctic**  
uarctic.org

**1998**

Arctic Council Iqaluit Declaration announces the “establishment of the University of the Arctic, a university without walls...”

Interim Council of the University of the Arctic meets for the first time in Fairbanks, Alaska

**1997**

Arctic Council asks Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) for a feasibility study on an Arctic university

**1999**

UArctic Circumpolar Coordination Office (later the UArctic International Secretariat) is established in Rovaniemi, Finland

**2000**

Establishment of Circumpolar Studies, Arctic Learning Environment, and north2north student mobility program as key UArctic programs

**2001**

UArctic is officially launched in Rovaniemi, Finland. First Council meeting

**2002**

First students take Circumpolar Studies courses and participate in north2north pilot exchanges

UArctic is granted official observer status at the Arctic Council

**2005**

Establishment of Thematic Networks as core program activities

**2006**

First degree graduates of Circumpolar Studies program

**2007**

First UArctic Rectors' Forum held at Dartmouth College, USA

UArctic participation in International Polar Year 2007-2008

**2008**

Establishment of the first UArctic Institute

**2009**

GoNorth program established  
Study Catalogue launched

**2011**

10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Council meeting in Lapland, Finland  
First non-Arctic members join UArctic  
IASC, IASSA and UArctic sign agreement on research cooperation in the Arctic

**2014**

Student Ambassador program launched

**2017**

UArctic partners with the Arctic Council on implementing one of the Finnish chairmanship priorities – education

Project of the Thematic Network on Teacher Education receives official SDWG status

**2016**

First ever UArctic Congress held in St Petersburg

Launch of the Research Infrastructure Catalogue

# UArctic: A Global Model for Cooperation in Higher Education and Science

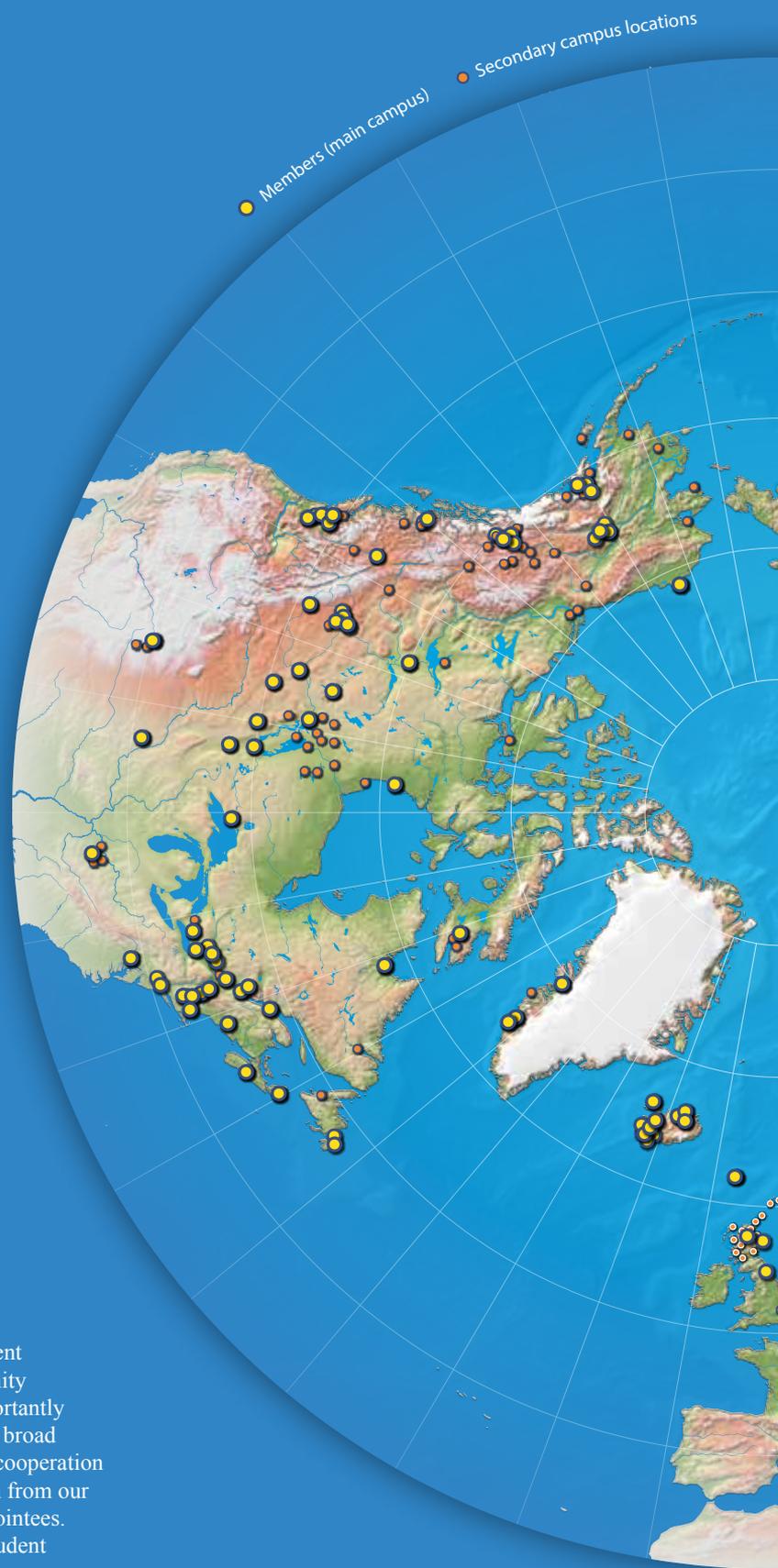
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Arctic's vision is "An Empowered North – With Shared Voices," underlining that all northerners must have a say in their own future and that of the region as a whole.

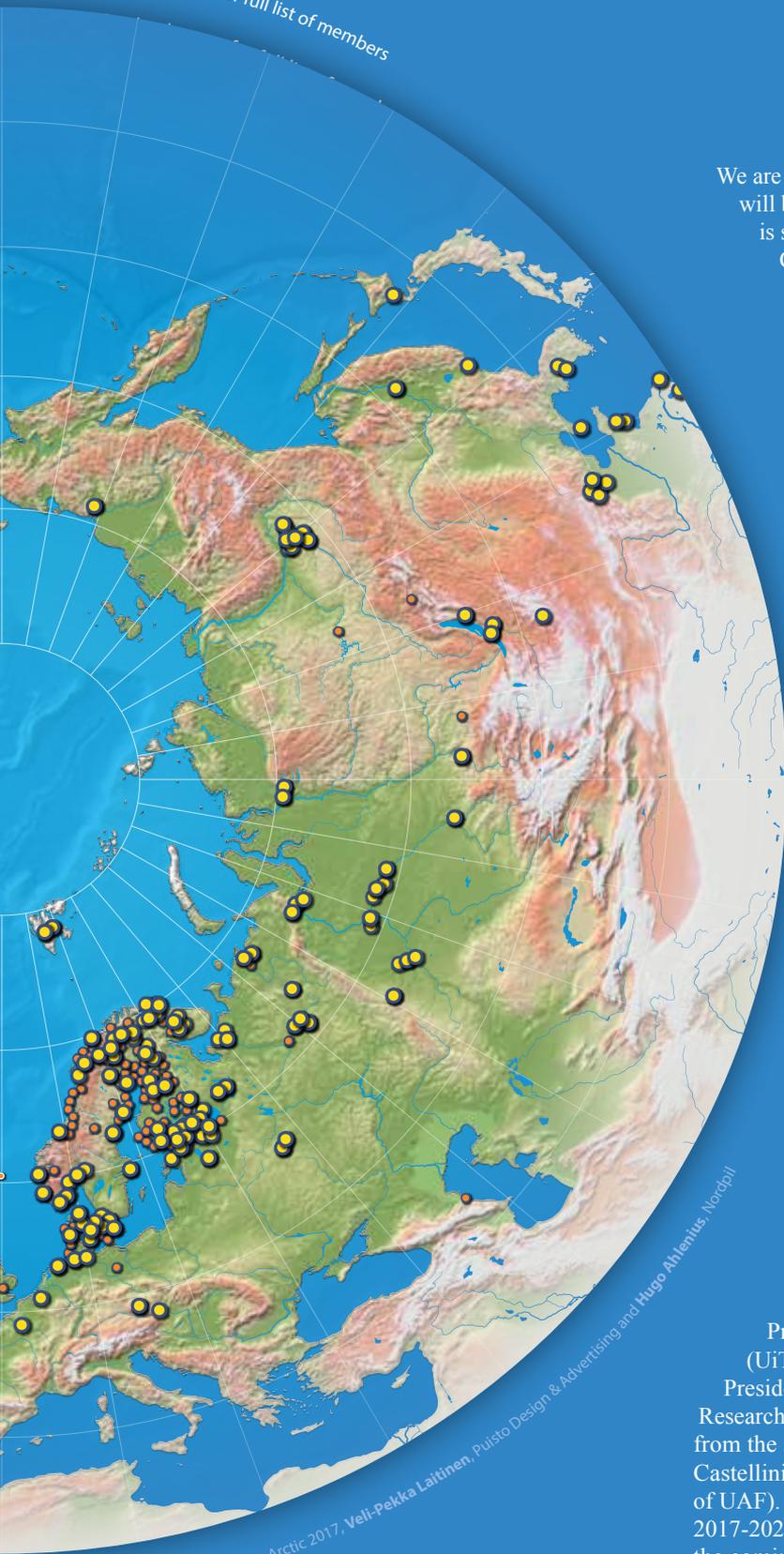
Our mission to "Empower the people of the Circumpolar North by providing unique educational and research opportunities through collaboration within a powerful network of members" reinforces that aim.

The highlight of 2016 was undoubtedly the first-ever UArctic Congress, hosted by St Petersburg University in September. The UArctic Congress 2016 brought together our members, partners and scientists from across the globe, which provided unique networking opportunities with such a wide range of Arctic actors and stakeholders. Over 450 participants representing 200 institutions from more than 20 countries took part. The Congress also featured a science section with over 250 oral and poster presentations.

UArctic held all of its organizational meetings at the Congress including the Council, the Board, the Rectors' Forum, and the Student Forum. Rectors from UArctic member institutions had the opportunity to meet with the Board, UArctic Thematic Networks and most importantly the representatives of the Student Forum. These meetings produced broad discussions on how circumpolar higher education, networking and cooperation can be improved. The Student Forum featured strong representation from our Student Ambassadors, both from the initial set and most recent appointees. The final Congress Declaration, as well as the response from the Student Forum, are available for download from the UArctic website.



See back cover for full list of members



We are already hard at work planning the next UArctic Congress, which will be held in Oulu and Helsinki, Finland in September 2018. This event is strongly linked to our continued close partnership with the Arctic Council during the Finnish chairmanship. As Finland has chosen education as one of its chairmanship priorities, the Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education will be featured prominently in the cooperation.

UArctic's strengthened focus on research cooperation continues to be a dominant theme. The Arctic Science Summit Week in Fairbanks in March 2016 saw the launch of the UArctic Research Infrastructure Catalogue, an online database of our members' facilities. This tool promotes science collaboration between members, and makes the best use of limited resources. UArctic also presented the first set of baseline research analytics reports at the UArctic Congress, done in cooperation with Digital Science, Über Research, Altmetric and Elsevier. The reports are available online on the UArctic website.

Seven new members joined the UArctic network in St Petersburg, with continued strong growth from North America and non-Arctic states. Trent University, University of Colorado, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of North Dakota, Churapchinsky State Institute for Physical Education and Sports, Korea Polar Research Institute, and Universität Hamburg were voted in at the Council meeting.

We also added six new Thematic Networks, expanding the breadth of issue-based research cooperation across UArctic. The list of networks now includes Arctic Coastal Communities for Sustainability, Arctic Economic Science, Arctic Safety and Security, Language Documentation and Language Technologies for Circumpolar Region, Sustainable Arctic Resources and Social Responsibility, and Sustainable Production and Foraging of Natural Products in the North.

UArctic strengthened its leadership by welcoming three new Vice-Presidents to the network. Previous Council chair Pål Markusson (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) was appointed as our first Vice-President Mobility in late 2016. In early 2017, long-time Vice-President Research Kari Laine (University of Oulu) was succeeded by Arja Rautio from the same institution, and our new Vice-President Academic Michael Castellini (University of Alaska Fairbanks) replaced John Eichelberger (also of UAF). UArctic's renewed leadership also led the development of our new 2017-2020 Strategic Implementation Plan that will guide UArctic's work in the coming years.

Map / © University of the Arctic 2017, Veli-Pekka Laitinen, Puisto Design & Advertising and Hugo Ahlertius, Nordpil





# At a Glance Statistics 2016

[www.uarctic.org](http://www.uarctic.org)



## north2north Student Mobility 2016

	OUT	IN
Norway	34	25
Sweden	17	13
Finland	15	18
Iceland	0	8
Greenland	3	10
Faroe Islands	5	0
Denmark	12	1
Canada	10	53
USA	2	14
Russia	46	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>144</b>

**908** Courses and programs in Study Catalogue

**594** Courses

**314** Programs

**434** UArctic news articles

**110** Entries in Research Infrastructure Catalogue

**694 913** Total website pageviews

**142 380** Member profile pageviews

**22 247** Outbound link visits to member websites

**1 371** Subscribers to email newsletter

**1 442** Facebook likes

**4 578** Twitter followers

## Membership

**188** Total

**137** Higher education institutions

**51** Other organizations

**1.7m** Students

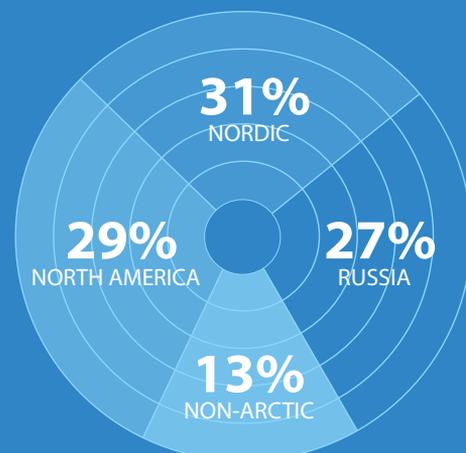
**314k** Staff

## Growth in UArctic Membership 2001-2017



## Distribution of UArctic Members 2017

- 16** Norway
- 7** Sweden
- 14** Finland
- 8** Iceland
- 13** Kingdom of Denmark
- 34** Canada
- 21** USA
- 50** Russia
- 24** Non-Arctic



# The Beginnings of Circumpolar Studies

By **JÓN HAUKUR INGIMUNDARSON**  
Senior Scientist, Stefansson Arctic Institute



**D**uring the latter days of the very first meeting of the Interim Council of the University of the Arctic in Fairbanks, consensus began to form out of disparate and foggy ideas towards a set of concrete deliverables. These plans included the governance structure and a coordination office, but several participants also insisted that the development of an education program should be a priority. Thus the concept of a “Circumpolar Baccalaureate Program in International Arctic Studies” – proposed by Sally Ross and Aron Senkpiel of Yukon

College – was unanimously agreed and became what we know as Circumpolar Studies today.

I joined the development team as chair, along with Aron, Steve Young and Richard Glen, as well as Outi Snellman and Scott Forrest from the coordination office. In Fairbanks – and afterwards – Aron and Scott, with perennial backing and support of Outi and Sally in particular, worked in unison as prime movers for making the idea of a Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies (BCS) into reality. Aron frequently portrayed himself as an administrator on a special mission – focussing his energies on seeing UArctic’s first programs through to development. He humorously referred to Scott and Jón Haukur as the administrator’s perfect young and middle-aged academic companions.

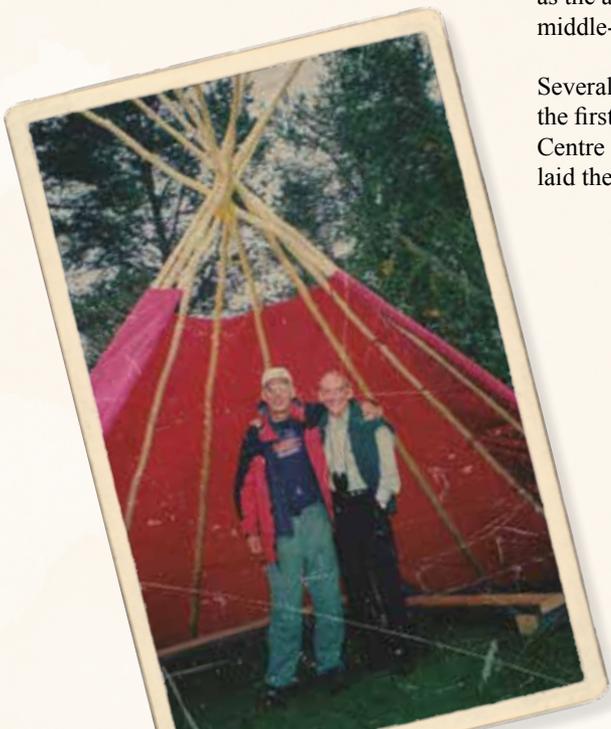
Several euphoric “aha” moments occurred in the first meeting of the development team at Centre for Northern Studies in Vermont that laid the foundation of Circumpolar Studies’

basic structure and content. Our idea was a set of six courses on the themes of Land and Environment, Peoples and Cultures, and Contemporary Issues plus BCS 100 – an Introduction to the Circumpolar World. This basic course structure is still what we have in place today.

A key milestone in the process was when Professor Olav Hesjedal, formerly the rector of Telemark College, joined the team. This addition was the result of bringing together the Scandinavian Seminar Group’s similar idea for an “Interdisciplinary Arctic Studies Program” into Circumpolar Studies. The merged effort continued under the umbrella of UArctic, but with substantial input of both expertise and funding from Scandinavian Seminar Group.

Olav was a person of high-mindedness, and his mode of being industrious and diligent was contagious – he was a strong vitamin injection for the team. He helped establish BCS’s set of foundation principles and also ensured that Russian and indigenous scholars had funding to participate in the development work. Olav ensured through these principles that Circumpolar Studies would develop interdisciplinary Arctic studies while promoting an integrated view of the region and fostering connections between northern neighbours.

When Aron passed away in March 2003 and Olav Hesjedal in September 2014, UArctic lost two of its founding creators and visionaries of its first flagship program, the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies.



*The Scandinavian  
Seminar Group and UArctic*  
**FROM VISION  
TO REALITY**

By **DAPHNE L. DAVIDSON**, Chair, Scandinavian Seminar  
and **WILLIAM J. KAUFMANN**, Chair Emeritus, Scandinavian Seminar  
and **RUNE RYDÉN**, Former Member of Parliament, Sweden

**“The opportunities and risks associated with the  
Arctic needed an educated population and a well-  
focused investment in research.”**



Photo Aili Flint



**T**he Scandinavian Seminar Group (the Seminar), a non-profit international educational organization headquartered in the US with a sister organization in Denmark, was founded in 1949 by Danish-Americans, many of whom had fought in the Danish resistance movement in World War II. The Seminar has provided unique educational opportunities for Americans in the Nordic countries, and conducted seminars and projects with the World Bank, the UN, and other international and development organizations.

The Seminar has also played a key role in UArctic since its inception. In September 1996, the Seminar co-sponsored a conference on the Arctic with GRID-Arendal, a Norwegian foundation associated with the United Nations Environmental Program. In light of growing international interest in the Arctic, the Seminar sought to provide a Nordic forum for government officials, scientists and others to review policy perspectives on the region. The Seminar Board member and GRID-Arendal Chair, Leif Christoffersen, organized the conference and published its papers in an influential book “Arctic Development and Environmental Challenges”.

The success of the Seminar’s Arctic conference, and the launching of the intergovernmental Arctic Council a few weeks later, provided a catalyst in the founding of UArctic. These two conferences made clear that the opportunities and risks associated with the Arctic needed an educated population and a well-focused investment in research. No single university in the Arctic could deliver what was needed. The idea of a consortium of Arctic universities took form – UArctic.

The vision of a networking university captured the imagination of the Seminar’s Board members, particularly the Seminar’s Chair, Erling Olsen, who was Speaker of the Danish Parliament and founder of the University of Roskilde, Denmark. The mission statement of UArctic, which included the phrase “Empower the people of the Circumpolar North by providing unique educational and research opportunities,” resonated with the Seminar’s educational and international

mission. As UArctic began to take shape with exceptional educational leaders such as Lars Kullerud, Outi Snellman and Mauri Ylä-Kotola, and with the willingness of so many institutions in Scandinavia, the US, Canada, and Russia to become actively involved, the Seminar’s Board felt UArctic could become a dynamic reality.

When the Arctic Council sponsored a feasibility study in 1997 and formed an Interim Council in 1998 to plan UArctic, Scandinavian Seminar took a leading role in both. The Seminar funded Olav Hesjedal, the first managing director of GRID-Arendal, to develop UArctic’s cornerstone academic program, the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies (BCS). Hesjedal worked for over a year to oversee the design of the BCS curriculum. When UArctic was officially launched in 2001, two Seminar Board members took governance positions: the Seminar’s Chair, Erling Olsen, was elected to its Board of Governors and Rune Rydén, a leading Swedish Parliamentarian, to its Council.

Since 2002 UArctic has been a focus of Scandinavian Seminar’s efforts, with significant human and financial resources of over one million euros committed to its development. Rune Rydén served as Chair of the Nominations and Membership Committee of UArctic’s Council and wrote its new bylaws – often informally called the “Rune Rules” – which have played a key role in stabilizing the Council and facilitating the practical work of the Council meetings. The Seminar helped develop UArctic’s GoNorth program and Study Catalogue, and made contributions to the UArctic Fund. Erling Olsen was also instrumental in securing ongoing financial support from the Danish government for UArctic’s operational and programmatic initiatives. The Chair of the Seminar’s US organization, William Kaufmann, served as UArctic Board Fellow and provided guidance on strategic planning and fundraising.

The Scandinavian Seminar Group has considered it a great privilege to be a founding member and key supporter of UArctic. The challenges facing the Circumpolar North are enormous, and the innovative educational enterprise of UArctic has made an invaluable contribution to the millions who live there.



# Circumpolar Collegiality from 1998 to 2006

*Reflections on the Early Days of the Council of UArctic*

By **ASGEIR BREKKE**, Chair of the Interim Council of UArctic (1998-2001), Professor Emeritus, UiT The Arctic University of Norway and **SALLY WEBBER**, Former Chair of the Council of UArctic (2001-2006), Former President, Yukon College



It is a pleasure for us to recall the optimism, the exhilaration and the challenges of the first years of UArctic's organizational and programmatic evolution. Intensely rewarding and productive collegial relationships were built during those meetings. Initially drawn together by our respective northern identities and scholarly interests, our relationships matured into international bonds of circumpolarity, and a new form of collegiality was born: "warm friends from cold places," as one member put it.

The first Council of UArctic meetings were intense, popping with ideas, models, worries, dreams and experiences. Mandated by the Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) feasibility study recommendations, endorsed by the Arctic Council, and charged with moving the dream forward in a practical way, we focused our collective wisdom on the task of realizing the recommendations set out by the circumpolar consultation.

**"A new form of collegiality was born: 'warm friends from cold places!'"**

Alternating formal sessions with lengthy informal ones, we shared our personal and professional points of view, and grew in the knowledge of our respective nations, institutions, and indigenous peoples' communities and cultures. This process was substantially aided by the practice of convening our meetings in member institutions around the global North. We explored the ways in which member universities, colleges and organizations were addressing the educational needs of northern communities, and then imagined together how formalizing international cooperation in the form of a new kind of university could amplify and enhance this work, reaching more deeply into our Arctic hinterlands, and bringing together differing traditions of northern knowledge.

One example of how this new collegiality worked was the shared interest in solving the problem of the permanent loss of northern students to southern universities, bleeding the North of educated youth. This concern was expressed by Canadian representatives and immediately recognized by Norwegian delegates. The planners of the University of Tromsø had wished to establish a northern university in Norway for precisely the same reasons. The creation of this highly successful university fed further discussion. Common interests such as these, with their problems and opportunities, resulted in productive conversations often long into the night.

Photo Heli Hurme



## AMY KRAUSE



In 2000, the phone rang one early morning while I was running late for work in Canada. Outi Snellman was on the other end, inviting me to intern for the UArctic Secretariat in Rovaniemi, Finland.

I began that year in Finland watching lights on the Ounasjoki river while calling my parents to let them know I had arrived. I ended the year watching a friend wade into an afternoon forest for an impromptu berry picking session. She was wearing a pair of high-heeled boots and a fine black coat that stood out against the greens and yellows of nature and autumn.

Leaving your family to become independent is part of becoming an adult. Leaving behind the North and your traditions shouldn't have to be. What is the point of learning if it doesn't shed light on what is relevant to you, your family and your community? No one should ever have to trade their identity for higher education.

UArctic was my first introduction to the North and to international cooperation. It shaped my resume and the next twenty years in unexpected ways.

Thanks to UArctic, the connection between land, identity and policy has held the spokes of my professional life together. The understanding that some voices and interests are marginalized by virtue of geographic distance from places and people of influence has stayed with me. Perhaps more than anything else, I also have an appreciation for the collegial cooperation across boundaries that our world so desperately needs now.

UArctic was nothing if not an eye-opening experience of many people from many different places, separated by oceans, languages and politics, coming together to affirm their connection to place, and to bring those experiences to bear in education. The accomplishment that UArctic was and is has only become clearer to me over time.

Identifying a problem is easy. Solving one is much harder. That is the work of the courageous, the tenacious, the persuasive, and perhaps the happily ignorant. (Because if any of us knew what was required to accomplish some things, would we ever start?) But UArctic did begin. And speaking only for myself, my perspective on the world, and what is required to improve it, have been shaped for the better. Our little planet – with its troubles – could use more of what UArctic has to offer.

After the launch in 2001, my internship ended and I returned to Canada to reconnect with family, but a life in the city was not to be. I ended up with a job in Banff, Alberta working for Mountain Forum – another place-based, international network. It was an eight-month contract. I stayed seven years. Today I work with Parks Canada, the Canadian national park service.

From my mountain town, I send UArctic and its employees, volunteers, students and alumni my best wishes for a beautiful twenty years to come. If you find yourself in the Canadian Rockies, look me up. Bring news from UArctic and, if you can, a jar of *puolukkahillo*.

We learned about each other's national and institutional educational policies and practices; how similar problems had been solved in other countries. We "mined" best practices among our members and marveled at the practical possibilities that surfaced. We speculated how new and emerging information and distance technologies might overcome problems of time, distance and isolation for our students, faculty and researchers. We struggled with how to address and incorporate traditions of indigenous knowledge. We worked at setting out what would become our programmatic priorities. We wrestled with the form of the Council itself, its composition, committees and procedures, always keeping inclusion and circumpolarity in the foreground of our decisions.

As UArctic has gone from success to success over subsequent years, it is a pleasure to reflect on these early, formative days, and the visionary individuals who live on in our memories.

*The authors would like to thank the Council executives, committee members and member organization representatives we worked with during these years. We are also deeply indebted to the UArctic International Secretariat for their support as UArctic took its first steps in bringing the programmatic dreams expressed in the CUA Feasibility Study Report into concrete form.*





By **CLAUDIA FEDOROVA**  
Head, Department of English  
and Regional Studies,  
North-Eastern Federal University

In 1987 President Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the world with the Murmansk Initiative, emphasizing the special role of the Arctic region for the benefit of the entire international community. This inaugurated a period of cooperation in the Arctic, exemplified through the Northern Forum (an international NGO established in 1991) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (created in 1993).

During the same period, the idea developed to bring together the universities and research institutions in the North in a single body; a “university without walls”, a “University of the Arctic”. A key figure was Outi Snellman, the Director of International Relations at the University of Lapland, who knew the universities and research institutes not only in Northern Europe and northern America but also in Northwest Russia. She involved a Russian institution from the start, the Kola Science Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Soon afterwards, during a Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) meeting in Aberdeen in 1998, Snellman suggested that the Sakha (Yakutsk) State University (now North-Eastern Federal University) should enter the Interim Council of the fledgling UArctic. In 2001, UArctic was declared established, the Circumpolar Studies (BCS) program was born, the north2north student mobility program developed.

## Growth of Russian Institutions’ Engagement in UArctic

The first student to receive a scholarship from the Scandinavian Seminar Group for the north2north program was a Sakha State University student, Ekaterina Evseeva. She used her scholarship to study indigenous education and culture at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. After returning to Yakutsk, Ekaterina was elected to the Board of UArctic to represent the students in the Arctic.

In 2003, at the initiative of Erling Olsen (Denmark) and Rune Rydén (Sweden), a grant was awarded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark together with the Scandinavian Seminar Group to expand the participation of Russian universities in UArctic. As a result, more and more Russian students took BCS courses online. Circumpolar Studies courses were also integrated into the curriculum of several Russian universities. Gradually other UArctic programs formed with Russian participation, including Thematic Networks, GoNorth, and UArctic Institutes. In addition to Sakha State University, which was already one of the first members, more Russian universities and institutions entered the network from all over the country.



**“In Russia, as throughout the Arctic, we know: united we are strong.”**

Approximately fifty Russian universities, institutes, academies and colleges are UArctic members today, with a common potential in the fields of education and science and a very active role in the network. They host some of the offices and positions of UArctic; for example, the UArctic Research Office is hosted by the Northern (Arctic) Federal University and the Russian Information Services by the North-Eastern Federal University, and the Vice-Chair of the Council of UArctic is from Buryat State University. The priority areas of the Russian member institutions are reflected in many of the Thematic Networks, four of which are also led by Russian institutions: World Images of Indigenous Peoples of the North; Language Documentation and Language Technologies for the Circumpolar Region; Local and Regional Development in the North; and Environmental Training and Education for Sustainable Development of the Arctic (NETESDA).

In Russia, as throughout the Arctic, we know: united we are strong, and we shall make our North a warm and safe home.

## NIKOLAI ARTEMEV

I heard about the University of the Arctic for the first time when I was a first-year student at the Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University, at that time Sakha (Yakutsk) State University. At NEFU, UArctic was well known for the north2north program, Circumpolar Studies online courses and UArctic meetings in Yakutsk.

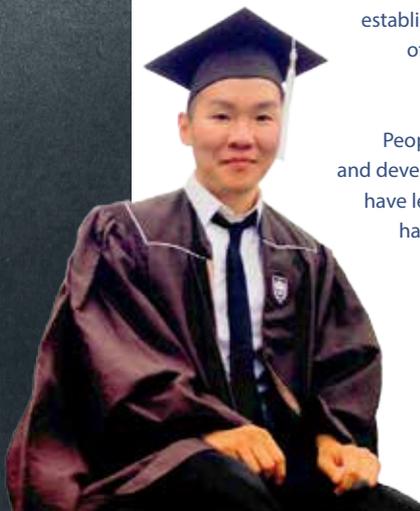
When I was a first-year graduate student, I was elected to represent NEFU at the 3<sup>rd</sup> UArctic Student Forum in Winnipeg, Canada. It was my first time to attend a UArctic event and my first time in Canada. It was wintertime in Winnipeg, and it snowed a lot. Our meeting started with introduction and ice-breaking. Each university delegation delivered their presentations. Then, Pierre-André Forest (Director of Governance Support at UArctic; this is when we first met) brought a case full of presents from UArctic and told us to choose one item – I got UArctic socks. That day, the Arctic became warmer and closer, and it was fantastic to meet students from Sweden, Canada, USA, and other countries.

We devoted the other days of the Forum to discussions and work on the Student Declaration. After several days and hours of brainstorming, sleepless nights and hundreds cups of coffee, we built our declaration around four major themes: active student representation, visibility, knowledge exchange, and improved educational opportunities. We thought that UArctic should have a Student Council which would embrace student representatives of member institutions. For visibility, we suggested promoting UArctic programs locally at each university by holding an annual Day of UArctic. Knowledge exchange included lectures on native languages, traditions and land management for every exchange student. Additionally, we proposed to rebrand the north2north program to show its connection to UArctic, and another important point was to increase faculty exchange between UArctic members. The final theme was strengthening distance education by offering courses in different languages, including indigenous language courses. The other part was to provide career opportunities by establishing student internship programs in the North.

I graduated from NEFU in 2010, and after that completed a MA degree in Comparative and International Education at Lehigh University College of Education (PA, USA). Currently, I serve as the Deputy Director of NEFU's International Relations Office, and also as the Head of the Planning and Management Department. In 2017, our office team signed an agreement with UArctic for another five years for NEFU to host the UArctic Russian Information Services. I think collaboration between UArctic and NEFU is on the rise as ever before. The longstanding partnership is based on mutual friendship, trust and support. Since the beginning

of its membership, NEFU has been supporting UArctic projects and programs in the Russian northeast and beyond. Through years, we have seen the establishment of Russian Information Services at NEFU, launch of several UArctic Thematic Networks, UArctic meetings in Yakutsk, and much more.

People of the Arctic are those who contribute to the progress and development of the organization. Several individuals from NEFU have leadership or governance positions in UArctic, and UArctic has a significant role in the development of international affairs of the North-Eastern Federal University, the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and of the Russian Federation in general. I am sure that this cooperation will continue to grow strong and wide, and our team will support and serve the North and its people!



## KAJ LYNÖE

I hail from Umeå in northern Sweden which is where I started my north2north journey. Studying nature guiding at Umeå University gave me the basics of biology, and I decided to pursue studies in biology because I enjoyed it so much. When my professor told me about the north2north mobility program, I knew I wanted to give it a shot – not least because it meant the opportunity to go to places like Alaska.

I was so fortunate as to receive a scholarship that covered two semesters abroad, at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). In the fall of 2015 I left home to embark on a journey that would end up being more rewarding than I could have ever imagined. The housing staff took good care of me when I arrived, and the international student service helped me and made me feel welcome. Upon my arrival in Anchorage I got in touch with one of my professors who met me in person before the start of the semester to go over what the college was like and what I could expect from the classes. It gave me great confidence, and studying was just so much fun. I was fortunate to be able to experience the Alaskan nature through a field-based biology class and a backpacking class.

In the spring I started working at the campus residence life as a residence advisor, which enabled me to learn about the local culture, meet a lot of different people and find my place in the community. Because I enjoyed Alaska so much, I tried my best to extend my stay, and at the end of the semester I was fortunate enough to be accepted as a field technician on a project in which UAA participated. After some training and preparations I flew out to western Alaska, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta by the Bering Sea. We were four people camping in the wilderness for three months, working, watching birds, enjoying the camp sauna and just having a good time! Out there I also got some valuable insights into the subsistence life style, partaking in the local community and listening to stories about the area and its people.

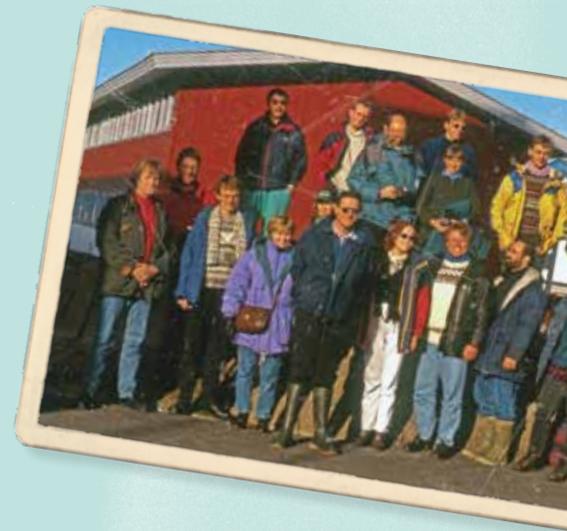
I stayed on for an additional semester on my own, working for the residence life and in the lab crunching some of the data collected during the summer. At the end of the field season I was offered the opportunity to continue as a graduate student, participating in an upcoming research project in northern Alaska. This went beyond anything I could have ever imagined!

I went back to my hometown in late December 2016 to finish my Bachelor's degree in Biology, and I'm now set to return to the US, with the field season starting soon. I am an enrolled graduate student at South Dakota State University, and going to spend my summers in northern Alaska.

I wish to thank UArctic and the north2north exchange program for providing a springboard into my academic adventure!



*Watch a clip from the field project.*



**“The major element was the direct confrontation with Arctic realities and the possibilities of discussing these.”**



# LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

## *The CASS PhD Network as a Precursor of UArctic Key Teaching Practices*

By **RASMUS OLE RASMUSSEN**, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Resource Development, Municipality of Kujalleq, Greenland and **GÉRARD DUHAIME**, Professor, Department of Sociology, Université Laval

**T**he CASS (Circumpolar Arctic Social Science) PhD network started in 1995. Nine international courses focusing on social sciences in the Arctic took place until 2007. Over 160 PhD students from different Arctic countries participated in the courses, and over seventy international social scientists contributed to the course arrangements. This innovative format proved its efficiency, and served as a model for UArctic key teaching practices for Thematic Networks and field courses.

One of the main reasons for the creation of the program was to break the isolation of doctoral students in Arctic social sciences, who shared common interests without even knowing it, and to support exchanges between them. For creating a program of high quality, we knew the critical mass was there, dispersed in our respective universities.

Doctoral students from participating universities would meet at least once a year for at least two intensive courses of two weeks in length. That provided a unique opportunity for a group of PhD students and university professors to share subjects, questions and knowledge. The responsibility for the practical arrangements was successively taken by the participating universities. A region as well as a theme was chosen as a suitable setting for each course, with emphasis on contemporary problems that were relevant for development in the Arctic.

The content of the courses was a combination of presentations by the participating faculty members, meetings with representatives from communities, indigenous organizations and relevant authorities, and contributions by the students. However, the major element was the direct confrontation with Arctic realities and the possibilities of discussing these with other participants and contributors. The lectures emphasized relevant theoretical approaches and methodological issues. They furthermore involved local authorities, governmental representatives, locals who were also involved actively in the development process, and local scholars as well as academics with special knowledge of the region in focus.

The most important individual contributions by the doctoral students were the presentations of their ongoing research which were commented on by other participating students and then discussed further. The guidelines and ideas from the participating students and professors gave valuable ideas for the doctoral students, just as the open discussions were a further boon.

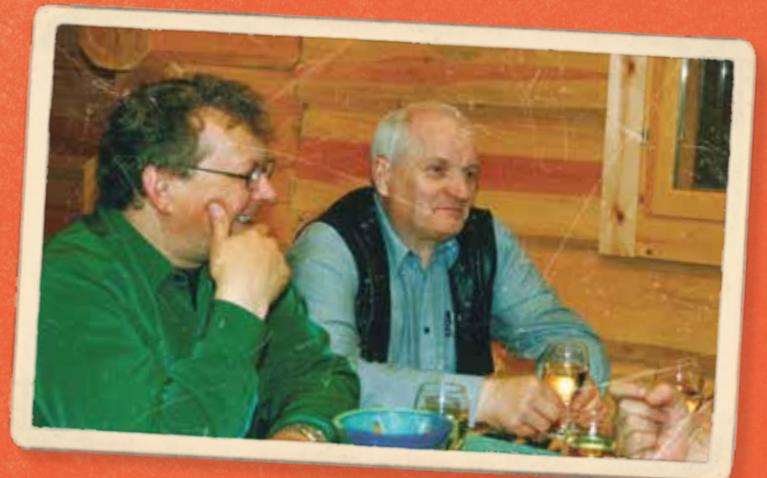
The experiences with the program were quite unique. The CASS network was an important contribution to the development of an interdisciplinary learning environment where it was possible to create interaction between different cultures and disciplines, and to establish a growing network of young and experienced scientists. And last but not least: by focusing not only on literature and theory, the approaches and methods used in the courses took advantage of the world surrounding us. This way the real world became one of the most important references for the PhD students' future work – the world in which they would have to solve problems.





# Strengthening Indigenous Engagement in UArctic

By **JAN HENRY KESKITALO**, Former Vice-President Indigenous, UArctic  
and **JOHAN DANIEL HÆTTA**, Former Member of the Council of UArctic





**T**his article focuses on our experiences of the early years of UArctic. We participated in central but different roles in the network: one as an institutional representative and a member of the Interim Council, continuing after the inauguration, and also serving in the Membership Committee; and the other as a member of the Board of Governors. We participated in the (at that time) more loosely formed Indigenous Issues Committee as well as in thematic networking of different kind.

The governments, the Arctic Council – including the indigenous Permanent Participants – and the Arctic Parliamentarians required that the needs of indigenous peoples and the integration of indigenous peoples in all processes be essential in the development, planning and operations of UArctic. Key indigenous institutions and organizations supported the idea, but with clear expectations.

Working at an institution dedicated to fulfilling the core needs for Sámi higher education, our experiences were and are flavored with a Sámi perspective. Serving in our respective UArctic roles we entered a sphere of all-indigenous issues and responsibilities. We set off with many years of experience from different indigenous networks as well as linguistic minority networking nationally and internationally.

Having been institutional leaders for many years, our Sámi perspective told us that small institutions had to fight on many fronts to survive. At our own institution the idea of UArctic was welcomed, but not unconditionally. There were many concerns. How would our voices be recognized? Would small institutions become players of significance? How relevant would UArctic become for indigenous development? In other words, strengthening indigenous engagement had many facets as we set off.

We considered our roles in UArctic important in moving the network towards adequate contributions to indigenous peoples of the Arctic. This had to include respecting indigenous views on needs; involving indigenous regions and communities through their institutions and organizations in a respectful and reciprocal manner; and finding respectful and relevant ways of delivering education and organizing research. We remember issues such as the use and integration of traditional indigenous knowledge, engaging with indigenous communities, and reaching out to communities with relevant and adequate programs as crucial elements and also expectations from manifold indigenous voices and communities.

Already in the initial stages engagement meant a need to develop positive and up-to-date recognitions and action statements into UArctic governance documents, Thematic Networks, program development as well as student exchange policies. Issues of indigenous control of education, when raised, often had to be answered by national authorities and locally at each institution. UArctic had no authority to override principles of established policies. Rather, the engagement would consist of finding flexible and smooth ways of action to get indigenous principles integrated on a broader front.

In most cases, we saw this process respectfully welcomed and managed. On the other hand, the critical issue became to identify core players and adequate funding for initiatives. When activities like the VERDDE student mobility program became established, along with other thematic initiatives, we felt we were on the right track. We also experienced the development of close and reliable relationships with key indigenous players (RAIPON, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Saami Council). Whenever UArctic governance bodies or Thematic Networks met, the aim to involve local constituencies, including representatives of indigenous communities, became a must in raising the indigenous engagement.

Our story covers only the initial stage, and we are aware of all the changes taken place in the years since. But we still wonder if it would be of interest and value to revisit some principles. One option could be to organize indigenous engagement through one national hub in each country or region. UArctic and the overall indigenous engagement could benefit from a coordinated effort regarding indigenous needs within the regions.



Photo Ulla Isotalo

*Far in the North – 350 km north of Rovaniemi, to be exact – is where Inari is located. Yet, this is the place where you will find both the Sámi Education Institute and its rector Liisa Holmberg, who is also the Chair of the Council of UArctic. Between travels and a busy schedule, she luckily had time to meet to talk about her experiences on the collaboration between smaller northern and indigenous institutions.*

Together We Stand  
**STRONGER**

By **MARIE SØNDERGAARD**

Former Intern, UArctic International Secretariat

In 2017, Finns celebrate the 100-year anniversary of their independence. On February 6, 2017 the Sámi also celebrated 100 years of Sámi collaboration. A huge milestone, some would say, and Liisa Holmberg agrees. When I asked her what this milestone means, she could not express it in words. “Come, come – I will show you,” she said and took me to see a wall that the students had decorated with pictures of Elsa Laula. One hundred years ago Elsa Laula actively promoted Sámi matters and convinced women to attend the first Sámi congress in Trondheim, Norway, with the result of forty women attending out of the 150 participants. This is how the collaboration across borders and later between institutions started.

Elsa Laula believed that the most essential was education, language, traditional livelihoods and cooperation across the borders. Now, one hundred years later, this is still essential. After almost losing their identity, language and culture, the Sámi are ready to look forward and plan the next hundred years. “The state almost wiped us away, but we are still here – we are still here, and stronger than ever.”

But how is this collaboration even possible, and why is it important to indigenous and northern institutions?

“UARctic has created a platform making collaboration between smaller and even bigger institutions possible. Even though we are small, the Sámi Education Institute is one of the few concentrated on indigenous lifestyle, clothing and handicrafts. Therefore many want to come and see how we are doing it,” Holmberg explains.

“UARctic has enabled us to make a long-term cooperation agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, making it possible for one of our teachers to travel to Alaska four times a year to teach them reindeer herding and handicrafts. Furthermore, it allows us to send students there for many weeks in a row to learn about their traditions and livelihoods.”

In her opinion, working together is essential in keeping research in the Arctic and also in keeping indigenous cultures alive.

“For us, collaboration is key. Sharing knowledge, learning from each other – that is important. And it is not only about sharing knowledge. It is also about knowing of each other, knowing that there are other indigenous people in the North. It is essential in preserving our culture! Imagine that we are building an Arctic family around the Circumpolar North through UARctic. That is one way for the indigenous people to stick together, and that is why collaboration across the borders is important. What UARctic does is pure Arctic cooperation; giving and taking within the Arctic region. We collaborate within the Arctic for the Arctic.”

By sharing knowledge between institutions, not only will more people learn about the indigenous lifestyle, but they can also share their programs and learn from each other. One of the biggest achievements for Holmberg, in addition to reindeer herding education, is Sámi language education. She was a part of a group that helped set up a language education program in Russia – something she would never have thought of, had it not been for UARctic.

“We helped indigenous people – the Enets, Nenets, Dolgans and Nganasans – in Russia who almost lost their native languages. We shared our language program with them, and now all three languages are still alive. This is something that would have been impossible without the contacts and support through UARctic. There is no doubt that one of the things we are most proud of is the Sámi language education!”

Holmberg hopes to see the Sámi language as natural in Finland as Swedish is, but there are some challenges. “We are still struggling. They say we are not important.” The lack of funding is also a problem. “It is important to keep sending students to other indigenous communities and stay connected. Within UARctic we have the north2north mobility program, but it is not enough. There are huge exchange programs such as Erasmus in Europe – we need that as well.”

With the support of the network, it is now possible to build ties around the North Pole. Without UARctic as a platform for collaboration, it would have been hard for indigenous students to meet each other, share their knowledge, and remind each other to be proud of being indigenous. Holmberg’s mission is that in the future national states will recognize the indigenous people as a resource instead of a problem.

“When we are together, we are much stronger.”



Photo Saami Council

*The modern political collaboration of the Sámi is relatively young: February 6, 2017 marked the 100-year anniversary of the first Sámi conference that brought together Sámi leaders. Cooperation among the Sámi, on the other hand, has longer roots.*

## 100 Years of **Sámi Cooperation**

**T**he Sámi have always been working with each other across Fennoscandia, but the creation of nation-states and their borders required a new way of thinking.

“National borders created challenges that weren’t there before, as the Sámi had to adapt to different rules, laws and systems that developed over time in each country. This created a need for a new kind of Sámi cooperation,” explains Gunn-Britt Retter, Head of the Arctic and Environment Unit of the Saami Council. “For the past hundred years the main objective has been to recreate and increase our sense of being one people. This is what the Saami Council also aims at.”

The 1917 Trondheim meeting was the first organizational effort to start advancing joint issues of the Sámi. Other initiatives followed, but the time between the two World Wars took its toll and the early initiatives almost died out. The need for organized collaboration remained however, and in 1956 the Saami Council was finally established.

The successful cross-border cooperation of the Sámi has also served as an example to indigenous peoples’ political cooperation globally. “The Sámi have definitely been the trailblazers – I believe the Saami Council is also the oldest still-existing indigenous peoples’ political organization. The first Arctic indigenous peoples’ gathering took place in 1973 when the Inuit and Sámi met to talk. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference was established a few years later in 1976, so

I would say that the Sámi were also a model for them.” Around the same time, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) was also established, where the Sámi engaged with North American, Australian and New Zealand indigenous peoples. In the 1980s and 1990s the Sámi also provided training courses to indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa and South America on how to get organized.

“We are lucky to live in countries with relatively positive attitudes towards indigenous rights,” Retter admits. “The Nordic countries are models on human rights issues. Every step in developing Sámi democracy and Sámi institutions here can be used as an example in other regions where the relationship between the state, the indigenous peoples and their organizations might not be as good.”

In one hundred years Sámi political cooperation has become more complex and multifaceted. With an official status in the Arctic Council, the United Nations and other international organizations, the Saami Council has a specific role to play in representing the Sámi civil society. The Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland, on the other hand, are elected bodies with their own agendas. With more actors there is also more room for self-criticism among the Sámi, but advancing joint issues, such as education, is still a priority.

“Education is a field you can’t escape,” Retter smiles. “We want education to be relevant to the Sámi; education that is culturally appropriate. We also want educated Sámi who can be active in their traditional livelihoods as well as modern careers. Everyone should have the option to do both – one shouldn’t exclude the other. The Sámi are a good model in that sense too, because we have demonstrated that it’s possible to maintain an indigenous lifestyle while living a modern life and using technology to our advantage.”

“So yes, education is important, and so is language. Our language holds crucial knowledge about the nature and livelihoods in the Arctic, and how that knowledge is conveyed to others. Protecting indigenous languages and livelihoods means that you also protect the Arctic environment and sustainable development.”

## LUIS PELLECCER

Most of my life has been spent in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Miami, Florida. For one reason or another, I never travelled much. Until 2012, at the age of 28, I had only been in the US with a brief visit to some family in Guatemala City, Guatemala. So when I had the opportunity to live and study in the Faroe Islands, a self-governing Danish territory, I did not hesitate. I said goodbye to my family and friends and moved to Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroes.

The program was a Master's of West Nordic Studies, Governance, and Sustainable Management (WNS) which happened to be the only English-taught program at the University of the Faroe Islands. My bachelor's was in political science, and I had always felt attracted to environmental issues, so the scholarly transition went smoothly. The program was new both in content and structure. Rather than being restricted to only one university, WNS was a collaboration between universities in Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Norway. This structure truly represents the cooperative nature of the West Nordic region. One requirement of the program is to spend one semester at a partner university. Thanks in part to the north2north program, I spent a semester at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik. I had a full course load and studied a range of fascinating subjects. As a bonus, Reykjavik offered plenty to see and do from the diverse and beautiful outdoors to the bustling city life.

Living in the Faroe Islands is to be surrounded by constant beauty and a rich culture. In Michigan I could spend time in lush forests or the dunes on the coast of Lake Michigan, in Miami I could lounge under a palm tree at South Beach, but nothing prepared me for the grandeur of living tucked away in magnificent fjords. The air and water are crisp and fresh, and the view is great. Torshavn is only a fraction of the size of the cities I have lived in, which offers a comforting sense of safety and community. It is a fast-growing city with new attractions coming every year.

The West Nordic region is a hotbed of activity with sustainable initiatives and international cooperation, and the WNS program will educate you and involve you with industry and government as a transdisciplinary approach is a cornerstone of the program. I highly recommend checking out this Master's program and studying in this wonderful region. Cheers!



UARCTIC IN THE CONTEXT OF

# *Circumpolar Cooperation*

By **HEATHER EXNER-PIROT**, Strategist for Outreach and Indigenous Engagement, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan

In the fall of 1998, ahead of the first Arctic Council Ministerial in Iqaluit, Canadian journalist Paul Koring asked in the *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, “Does a University of the Arctic matter or is it a last-minute effort to find something to show at the first Arctic Council summit?”

How many Arctic initiatives have been greeted the same way – considered an interesting idea, perhaps, but untested, indeed untestable, and thus subject to skepticism. Do we have enough in common, across our northern borders, to benefit from each other’s knowledge and experiences?

Are we trying too hard to create a regional Arctic identity when so much that matters to communities – language, the land, traditional knowledge – is local?

In some ways, UArctic is a microcosm of the struggle to find relevance for the regional level of governance. It has not always succeeded. There were aspirations twenty years ago that UArctic would provide a solution to the challenge of capacity in small colleges, providing opportunities for northerners living in remote communities to access a university education using new technologies. But for many, a circumpolar perspective was too abstract, and local needs too defined to adapt to the flexibility required by multiple education systems, curriculum needs and time zones.

Undeterred, UArctic found its niche, and filled a gap that perhaps we did not know existed back in 1997: issues-based research collaboration, epitomized in its Thematic Networks. Focusing on specific issues – from food security to law, and from teacher education to northern tourism – made the regional scope not only manageable but advantageous.

Universities are natural platforms for regionalization; conferences, student exchanges and field schools are all proven ways to disseminate information quickly across borders, share perspectives and establish consensus. Few other organizations have the same interest and incentive in investing in such collaboration. There is growing recognition of the role that institutions of higher education play as mechanisms for public diplomacy, and the impact has been particularly

noticeable in the Arctic region. Russia's active engagement in UArctic, for example, has created opportunities for cross-border scholarly engagement and understanding that has made regional political isolation more costly and undesirable for both sides.

It is true that the UArctic is only a tool. How useful it is depends a great deal on how much the member institutions decide to leverage it. What UArctic provides is an opportunity: to connect with other like-minded researchers, to broaden the impact of their work, to develop joint programming, and to offer context-relevant mobility opportunities for students, staff and faculty. Numerous funding opportunities, supported by a select few Nordic nations, have

## **“UArctic represents the triumph of scope over scale.”**

allowed good ideas to be translated into meaningful initiatives. UArctic is also arguably the most accessible regional Arctic organization – open to any interested researcher or student, even at the undergraduate level – whereas other regional Arctic institutions tend to have an elitist aspect to them.

UArctic represents the triumph of scope over scale, building on the idea, inherent in the Arctic animus, that collaboration is not only desirable but necessary. Twenty years later, the answer is clear: the University of the Arctic matters.



# Reflections on the University of the Arctic at Twenty

By **ORAN R. YOUNG**, Professor Emeritus,  
University of California, Santa Barbara

**“The current decade is a time  
of developing constructive  
relationships between the  
Arctic as a distinctive region  
and the outside world.”**

**L**ike other institutions of higher learning, UArctic is dedicated to the production, preservation and transmission of knowledge. But whereas other universities are organized as collections of departments reflecting the concerns of established disciplines, UArctic’s structure features Thematic Networks addressing cross-cutting topics like health and well-being, local and regional development, and food security. The product of necessity as much as design, this structure has proven beneficial in practical terms. It bypasses the problem of dealing with organizational silos, which has hampered the efforts of mainstream universities to make their work relevant to the pursuit of sustainability in the Anthropocene.

Those of us who led the effort to create UArctic in the 1990s focused on the challenge of delivering education and conducting research for the North and in the North, and for good reasons. The small, widely dispersed human communities located in the Arctic often made it necessary for students to go south in search of education, and encouraged the development of research programs dominated by southerners. Understandable as it may have been, this situation had severe drawbacks. UArctic set out to address this concern by creating a university without walls and developing programmatic

UArctic and Indigenous Peoples

# *Onwards with Shared Voices*

By **GERALD ANDERSON**, Vice-President Indigenous, UArctic, Director, Department of Development and Engagement, Fisheries and Marine Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland

initiatives featuring alliances between Arctic institutions of higher learning, student mobility opportunities, and collaborative research networks. While there is still more to be done, UArctic certainly has made a difference in these terms.

More recently, UArctic has responded to the rapid growth of interest in the Arctic on the part of individuals and organizations located outside the Circumpolar North. Today, the membership of UArctic includes organizations based in France, Germany and the UK as well as in China, Japan and Korea. This represents a natural adaptation to changing times. If the 1990s was a period of identifying and responding to the particular needs of the Arctic, the current decade is a time of developing constructive relationships between the Arctic as a distinctive region and the outside world.

Without a doubt, UArctic is flourishing; it has identified a niche in the world of higher learning and demonstrated adaptability in developing programmatic initiatives to fill this niche. The challenge going forward will be to maintain a proper balance between the continuing need to engage in education and research in the North and for the North, and the growing importance of navigating relations between the Arctic and the rest of the world. Meeting this challenge will not be easy, but it offers an unparalleled opportunity to contribute to the future of the Arctic as a zone of peace and prosperity.

**W** With the establishment of the University of the Arctic in 2001, indigenous peoples of the Arctic were given a unique opportunity to contribute to a post-secondary education system that is designed by and for the people of the North. We must build on this momentum and achieve even more toward strengthening our collective resources in education, research and outreach.

Much has been done, and there is still much work to do. For the past 25 years or so, many people have lectured, laboured and lobbied to bring UArctic to the status and position it enjoys today. It is indeed with “shared voices” that we both celebrate the accomplishments of these past visionaries and continue their passion in advocating for more progress – whether that be through broadening the reach of our northern voices, promoting inclusiveness or building reciprocal partnerships.

UArctic was established by the Arctic Council for indigenous peoples and all peoples of the North. With the support of the Arctic Council and the six indigenous peoples’ organizations, UArctic has become a world recognized brand. The time has come for us as indigenous peoples to accept this challenge and take ownership of this great gift we have been given.

Many indigenous leaders have been involved in the growth of UArctic, and it is now the younger generation’s turn to take on the responsibility. I hereby invite indigenous youth to get involved in UArctic and lead the way for all peoples of the North! UArctic’s vision of an empowered North with shared voices is truly an opportunity to grasp for our youth and coming generations. The future is in you.

# UArctic members

\*Pending approval by Council in 2017

## CANADA

Arctic Athabaskan Council  
 Arctic Institute of North America  
 Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies  
 Aurora College  
 Brandon University  
 Cape Breton University  
 Center for Northern Studies / Centre d'Etudes Nordiques  
 Faculty of Communication, Arts and Technology - Simon Fraser University\*  
 Gwich'in Council International  
 Lakehead University  
 Makivik Corporation  
 Memorial University of Newfoundland  
 Northlands College  
 Nunavut Arctic College  
 Nunavut Sivuniksavut  
 Polar Libraries Colloquy  
 Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre  
 Royal Military College of Canada  
 Royal Roads University  
 Saint Mary's University  
 TELUS World of Science - Edmonton  
 Trent University  
 Université du Québec à Montréal  
 Université du Québec à Rimouski  
 Université Laval  
 University College of the North  
 University of Alberta  
 University of Northern British Columbia  
 University of Regina  
 University of Saskatchewan  
 University of Winnipeg  
 Vancouver Island University  
 Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute  
 Yukon College

## DENMARK/FAROE ISLANDS/ GREENLAND

Aalborg University  
 Aarhus University  
 Arctic Technology Centre - Technical University of Denmark  
 Copenhagen Business School  
 Department of Environmental and Business Economics - University of Southern Denmark  
 Greenland Institute of Natural Resources  
 Ilisimatusarfik / University of Greenland  
 Nordisk Fond for Miljø og Udvikling  
 Perorsaaneramik Ilinniarfik / College of Social Education

Roskilde University

Technical University of Denmark\*  
 University of Copenhagen  
 University of the Faroe Islands

## FINLAND

Diaconia University of Applied Science  
 Finnish Institute of Occupational Health  
 Finnish Meteorological Institute  
 Kajaani University of Applied Sciences\*  
 Lapland University of Applied Sciences  
 Laurea University of Applied Sciences  
 Oulu University of Applied Sciences  
 Sámi Education Institute  
 University of Eastern Finland  
 University of Helsinki  
 University of Lapland  
 University of Oulu  
 University of Tampere  
 University of Turku

## ICELAND

Arctic Portal  
 Bifröst University  
 Iceland Academy of the Arts  
 Reykjavik University  
 Stefansson Arctic Institute  
 University Centre of the Westfjords  
 University of Akureyri  
 University of Iceland

## NORWAY

Arran Lulesami Center  
 Center for International Climate and Environmental Research  
 GÁLDU Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
 GRID-Arendal  
 International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry  
 International Sámi Film Institute\*  
 Nord University  
 Norwegian Scientific Academy for Polar Research  
 Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
 Sámi University College  
 UiT The Arctic University of Norway  
 University Centre in Svalbard  
 University of Agder  
 University of Bergen  
 University of Oslo  
 University of Stavanger

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Arctic College of the Peoples of the North  
 Arctic Research Center of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District\*  
 Arctic State Institute of Arts and Culture  
 Baltic State Technical University\*  
 Barguzinsky State Nature Biosphere Reserve and Zabaikalsky National Park  
 Buryat State Academy of Agriculture  
 Buryat State University  
 Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North / Russian Indigenous Training Centre  
 Churapchinsky State Institute for Physical Education and Sports  
 East-Siberian Institute of Economics and Management  
 European University at St Petersburg  
 Far Eastern Federal University  
 Far Eastern State Transportation University  
 Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia  
 Industrial University of Tyumen  
 Institute of the Humanities and the Indigenous Peoples of the North - Siberian Branch RAS  
 Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
 Komi Republican Academy of State Service and Administration  
 Luzin Institute for Economic Studies - Kola Science Centre RAS  
 Murmansk Arctic State University  
 Murmansk State Technical University  
 Naryan-Mar Social Humanitarian College  
 National Research Tomsk State University  
 Nenets Agrarian Economic Technical School  
 Nizhnevartovsk State University  
 Norilsk State Industrial Institute  
 North-Eastern Federal University  
 Northern (Arctic) Federal University  
 Northern National College  
 Northern State Medical University  
 Petrozavodsk State University  
 Project Management Centre  
 Pskov State University  
 RAIPON  
 Russian State Hydrometeorological University  
 Scientific Research Institute of National Schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)  
 Siberian Federal University  
 St. Petersburg University  
 Surgut State Pedagogical University

Surgut State University  
 Syktyvkar Forest Institute  
 Syktyvkar State University  
 Taymyr College  
 Tyumen State University  
 Ukhta State Technical University  
 Ural Federal University  
 Yakutsk State Agricultural Academy  
 Yamal Multidisciplinary College  
 Yamal Polar Agro-economic Technical School  
 Yugra State University

## SWEDEN

Abisko Scientific Research Station  
 Luleå University of Technology  
 Lund University  
 Mid Sweden University  
 Sámi Educational Centre  
 Stockholm University  
 Umeå University

## UNITED STATES

Aleut International Association\*  
 Antioch University New England  
 Arctic Research Consortium of the United States  
 Association for Canadian Studies in the United States  
 Center for Circumpolar Studies  
 Climate Change Institute - University of Maine  
 Cold Climate Housing Research Center  
 Dartmouth College  
 Florida SouthWestern State College  
 Ilisagvik College  
 Institute of the North  
 New Jersey City University\*  
 Scandinavian Seminar Group  
 The Fletcher School - Tufts University\*  
 University of Alaska Anchorage  
 University of Alaska Fairbanks  
 University of Colorado  
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
 University of North Dakota  
 University of Washington  
 Western Kentucky University\*

## NON-ARCTIC

Alfred Wegener Institut (Germany)\*  
 Arctic Centre - University of Groningen (Netherlands)\*  
 Austrian Polar Research Institute (Austria)  
 Beijing Normal University (China)\*  
 Centre for Polar Ecology - University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic)\*  
 Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences (China)  
 Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences (China)  
 Dalian Maritime University (China)  
 Durham University (UK)  
 Educational Studies School - Mongolian National University of Education (Mongolia)  
 Environmental Development Centre - Ministry of Environmental Protection (China)  
 First Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration (China)  
 Hokkaido University (Japan)  
 International Polar Foundation (Belgium)  
 Korea Maritime Institute (Korea)  
 Korea Polar Research Institute (Korea)  
 National Marine Environmental Forecasting Center (China)  
 Ocean University of China (China)  
 Polar Research Institute of China (China)  
 Research Centre CEARC - University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (France)  
 Second Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration (China)  
 Third Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration (China)  
 University of Aberdeen (UK)  
 University of the Highlands and Islands (UK)  
 Universität Hamburg (Germany)



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