



UARctic Strategic Plan 2020

Our Vision

An Empowered North – With Shared Voices

Our Mission

Empower the people of the Circumpolar North by providing unique educational and research opportunities through collaboration within a powerful network of members.

Our Values

Circumpolar

UARctic promotes northern voices in the globalizing world, reflecting common values and interests across all eight Arctic states and among all northern peoples and cultures.

Inclusive

UARctic promotes cultural diversity, language plurality and gender equality while highlighting the partnership between the region's indigenous peoples and other northerners.

Reciprocal

UARctic promotes respectful relationships in education, science, research and policy based on reciprocity, equality and trust between northerners and other partners. This approach values the inclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, together with multidisciplinary perspectives from the arts, social and natural sciences.

How We Serve the North

UARctic benefits students, public and private sectors, and the North as a region by creating strong international collaboration among its members that:

- Creates shared knowledge, competences and resources by matching capacity to needs
- Connects traditional and indigenous knowledge systems with modern academia
- Partners with northern communities and indigenous populations to respond to their educational aspirations and requirements
- Bridges dialogue across different sectors and regions of the North, and with the world
- Builds shared services that facilitate and promote cooperation and collaboration
- Increases collaboration opportunities for our community of faculty, staff and students
- Promotes the collective views of its members and broadens the voice of the North in the world

Our 2020 Goals

Educational Access for Northern Students

Students in the North have access to the best and most relevant instructional and training resources.

- UArctic leads student mobility efforts among the Arctic states
- Northern students have easy access to and participate in top-quality undergraduate and graduate programs throughout the Arctic
- Northern students have easy access to field schools and joint programs among UArctic member institutions
- Northern students can participate in degree programs, shared courses or field schools initiated by UArctic Thematic Networks
- UArctic members combine student and faculty mobility with research cooperation adding values to learning environments

Research Representation in the North

UArctic members are the key participants in Arctic research.

- UArctic maintains the foremost inventory of Arctic research capacity
- UArctic members are involved together in addressing critical Arctic research issues
- The Arctic Council and others look to UArctic and its members as their shared infrastructure to address relevant research needs
- UArctic Thematic Networks link educational and research programs that identify and respond to the strategic needs of the Arctic states
- UArctic develops new methods to combine academic research and traditional knowledge through participation by and with northern communities.
- UArctic works with IASC, IASSA and other partners to build strong northern-relevant and collaborative research capacity in the North

Expanding Knowledge of the North

UArctic is a leader in expanding knowledge about the North.

- UArctic's Circumpolar Studies is the leading curriculum for overall circumpolar understanding
- UArctic members use the network to attract students interested in the North
- UArctic members' research results are accessible to researchers, policy makers and the public
- UArctic members share instructional, training and research resources to expand northern knowledge
- UArctic Thematic Networks communicate their efforts to the broader public

Engaged Membership Network

UArctic members gain value by their participation in the organization.

- UArctic members cooperate with each other on multiple levels, focusing on faculty, institutional leadership and international collaboration
- Past and present UArctic students form a community who share pride in their knowledge

- UArctic represents its members' interests internationally by promoting their diverse and shared capacity to serve northern communities and interests
- UArctic has a sustainable business model providing necessary infrastructure to support the network
- The Arctic Council, the Standing Committee of Arctic Parliamentarians and other Arctic leadership institutions recognize UArctic and its members as the educational, training and research engine of the North

BACKGROUND

Who We Are

UArctic was created through an initiative of the Arctic Council (Iqaluit Declaration 1998) and was officially launched in 2001. 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, thereby enabling member institutions to better serve their constituents and their regions. Cooperation in education, research, outreach and engagement enhances human capacity in the North, promotes viable communities and sustainable economies, and engages partners from outside the region.

With Shared Voices

UArctic works in partnership with indigenous peoples, recognizing their integral role in northern education, training, knowledge generation and transfer, and seeks to engage their perspectives and participation in all of its activities.

Representatives of the Arctic indigenous peoples have been strong partners in the development of UArctic through both their organizations, who are Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council, and their higher education institutions. During the feasibility study phase, the (then) three indigenous peoples permanent participant organizations drafted a statement of support and a challenge to the new organization entitled “With Shared Voices.” UArctic took this phrase as its motto to be a constant reminder of the organization’s commitment to the views and forms of knowledge of the region’s indigenous peoples.

UArctic remains committed to the particular education needs of northern indigenous peoples and must act to ensure indigenous perspectives are meaningfully represented in all its activities and structures.

How We Operate

UArctic’s organization and operations model are geared towards maximizing value for its members and impact for students and the region. UArctic programs are based on northern needs and member priorities, and they are expressions of our goals and values. UArctic carries out its mission through collaborative activities that build joint education and research through Thematic Networks, Institutes, mobility and shared services, and by representing the interest of its members in circumpolar cooperation. UArctic’s activities, leadership and organization are distributed among its members. UArctic is fully controlled by its members who elect the Board of Governors. To the Arctic Council and other international fora, UArctic represents the educational, training and research engine of the North.

Our Context

The world, particularly the Circumpolar North, is in a period of rapid change. Similarly, the world of international higher education and research is changing. These changes include climate change, increased socio-economic interdependence, heightened economic interest in northern natural resource extraction, internationalization, changes in higher education, and the accelerating use and spread of information and communication technologies.

The Arctic region is rich in resources and has a small and dispersed population. With the global population approaching ten billion, the world’s need for northern resources is evident, producing both opportunities and challenges. At the same time, climate change in the Arctic is twice the global average. The world influences and is dependent on the Arctic; what we do in the Arctic influences the world.

The North possesses a vast set of knowledge and skills, built over generations by indigenous peoples and other northerners. This capacity is manifested in the region's modern institutions of learning and in the indigenous knowledge held by communities. Combining traditional knowledge with modern academic approaches at northern academic institutions represents an opportunity unique to the Arctic. Northern competence needs to be strengthened and utilized to deal as effectively as possible with the opportunities and challenges that the region faces. With a small, dispersed and shifting population, northerners must work together, as well as with external partners.

The North has roughly 0.1 percent of the global population, ten percent of the surface of earth, and is estimated to hold over twenty percent of undiscovered petroleum resources. The region has some of the world's most important fisheries, minerals, and supply of fresh water. The vast boreal forest, which surrounds the Arctic region, is the largest terrestrial ecosystem in the world, and represents forty percent of the world's forestry economy. The North also holds large areas of land unaffected by modern human activity and unique ecosystems of global significance, and is an attractive destination for tourists. The North is essential to the global climate system. It is evident that the resources and ecosystems of the North could easily support its population in a sustainable manner and build a modern future with modest outtake of the region's resources. The challenge is, however, how to safeguard the natural and social values in the North and develop opportunities for its peoples while making sensible use of the available surplus in order to meet the needs of a growing global population.

The sustainable use of northern resources can serve the growing global need. The peoples of the North have the right to choose a path to their own future. Respect, knowledge, and building northern competence can ensure northerners have a strong say and receive fair benefits from the export value of northern resources.

The University of the Arctic will work to strengthen knowledge and capacity that meets the needs of the North and the world. UArctic believes that a sustainable future for the North and its people lies in a competent northern population, a strong northern knowledge base, and partnerships with the non-Arctic world. The key elements of this vision include strengthening the voice of the Arctic in the world and likewise the world's understanding of the Arctic, as well as cooperating across borders in the North to leverage experience, knowledge, competence, investment and influence.