



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

**First UArctic Student Forum Declaration  
Fairbanks, Alaska, 14 August 2010**

**The Role of Institutions of Higher Education in Addressing Community  
Change and Challenges in the North**

Communities of the Arctic are experiencing unique challenges resulting from rapid socio-ecological and global change. This is substantiated by local observation and recent international research<sup>1-4</sup>. The end of the Fourth International Polar Year signals an opportunity for the University of the Arctic to play an increased role in identifying and addressing these distinctive challenges. As a network of educational institutions representing the circumpolar north, the University of the Arctic is poised to effectively and creatively respond to the ever-changing needs of northern communities.

There exists an opportunity to better interface the diversity of knowledge in the Arctic. Cross-scale dialogue that focuses on the dual goals of information sharing and problem solving enhances the resilience and adaptability of northern communities. The University of the Arctic has the capacity to empower stakeholders, including students, educators, rural residents, Indigenous peoples, and industry professionals, by providing a forum for the exchange of knowledge, in addition to providing educational opportunities and facilitating research.

Consistent with the UArctic Strategic Plan, we offer the following recommendations:

- 1) Strengthen the collaboration with Arctic Indigenous peoples.
  - Request formal review of UArctic and member institutions' activities by Arctic Indigenous peoples' representative organizations (local to international)
  - Strengthen the two-way sharing of knowledge between UArctic institutions and Indigenous communities
  
- 2) Provide opportunities for community members and stakeholders to identify and communicate their challenges and needs to refine the development and delivery of specific education and training aimed at building local capacity.
  - Host community meetings by UArctic member institutions to exchange ideas and review activities
  - Enhance mechanisms to strengthen local voices and support self-determination on issues that impact communities (e.g., policy, sustainable development)
  - Encourage collaboration between UArctic and the private sector to enhance sustainable economic development, student mobility, and fundraising

- 3) Improve access to knowledge for all community members through open university, extension and outreach programs, and distance education.
- Offer workshops, training courses, seminars and professional development opportunities
  - Improve teacher education and the quality of distance education
  - Establish a thematic network focused on international outreach with the long-term goal of creating a central extension office
- 4) Develop and strengthen opportunities for UArctic students to participate more actively in UArctic activities and decision-making.
- Organize annual UArctic Student Forum in conjunction with the Rectors' Forum
  - Develop UArctic student strategy and principles
  - Establish a course and instructor evaluation process shared across the network
  - Increase student participation in the Thematic Networks through outreach, fellowships and internships
- 5) Enhance UArctic visibility to increase participation among UArctic member institutes and the student community.
- List UArctic curriculum in the member institutions' course catalogues for degree credit
  - Offer UArctic endorsement to accompany degrees from the home institutions
  - Encourage the creation of a UArctic student association in each member institution

<sup>1</sup> Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Arctic Human Development Report, 2004

<sup>3</sup> Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Arctic Social Indicators, 2010



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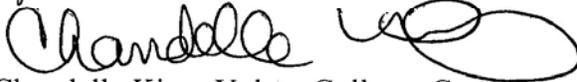
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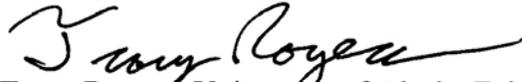
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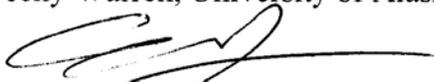
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