

Foreword

Providing high quality education to northern peoples is vitally important in order to equip our youth and adults with the knowledge necessary to compete in this complex world we live in.

In any culture, knowledge is power. In our northern regions, it is also the great equalizer. In the past half century, we have experienced a whirlwind of change, much of it leaving aboriginal people at the negative extremes of social and economic statistics. We can, and will change that by combining academic education with our knowledge (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) and embracing education values as a necessary part of our daily existence and future.

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a new institution with a clear mandate to meet these needs. Through developing courses, programs and research initiatives relevant and sensitive to the many cultures and languages of northern peoples, its commitment is to contribute to a stronger and more prosperous Arctic region, and a clear circumpolar presence in the global community.

UArctic was created to provide higher education, appropriate to indigenous cultures, languages and identity, that addresses the unique environmental and geographic realities faced by Arctic communities. It will provide education programs relevant to the social, economic, and environmental challenges that are emerging across the Circumpolar World. The challenges are broad and complex, ranging from social and environmental threats associated with climate change, to providing training and employment opportunities for a young and a rapidly growing population.

UArctic will help educate the people of the North, whether they are indigenous or not, providing them with the tools to help their communities tackle sustainable development issues. This will contribute to forming flourishing societies with vibrant economies that include shipping, airlines, fisheries, education, health and social well-being, and community development.

Simply put, our overall UArctic goal is to create a strong, sustainable circumpolar region by empowering northerners and northern communities through education and shared knowledge.

Ms. Mary Simon

Canada's former Ambassador of Circumpolar Affairs and former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, member of UArctic Board of Governors

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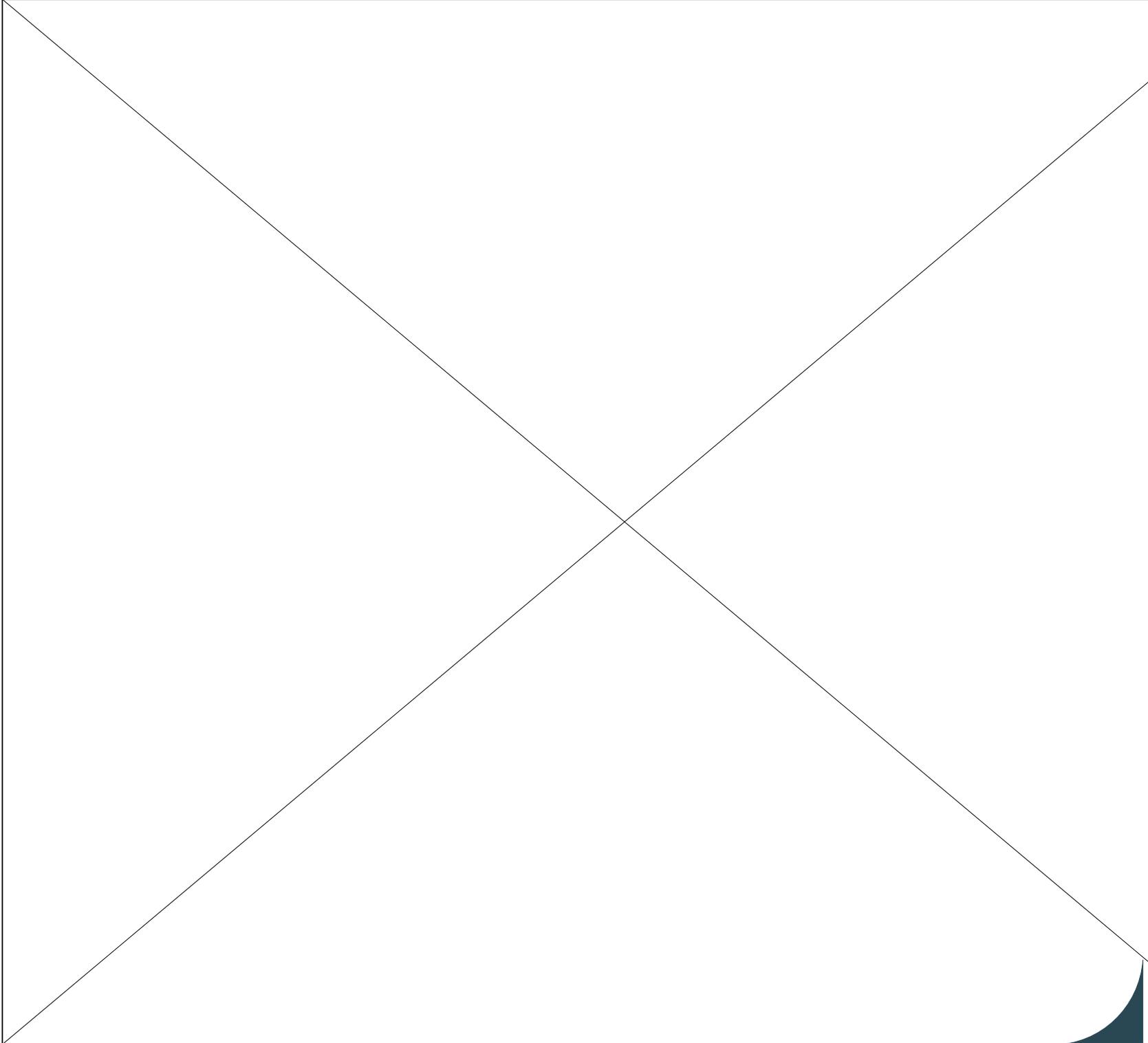
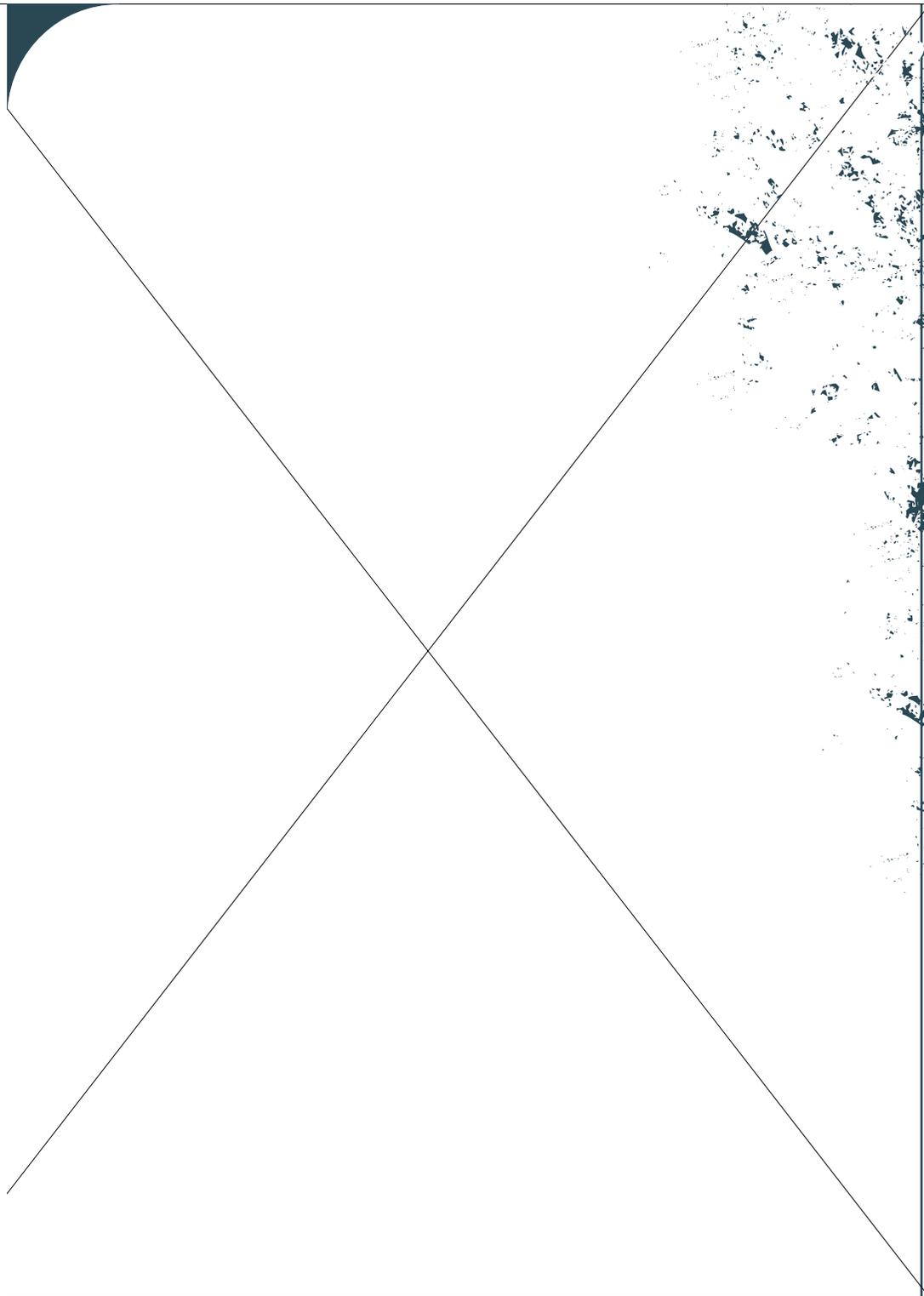


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"The University of the Arctic is a bold, new stage in the evolution of a circum-polar academy. By developing and sharing northern knowledge, we have begun to transform educational opportunities for our communities."

Sally Webber
President, Yukon College, Canada

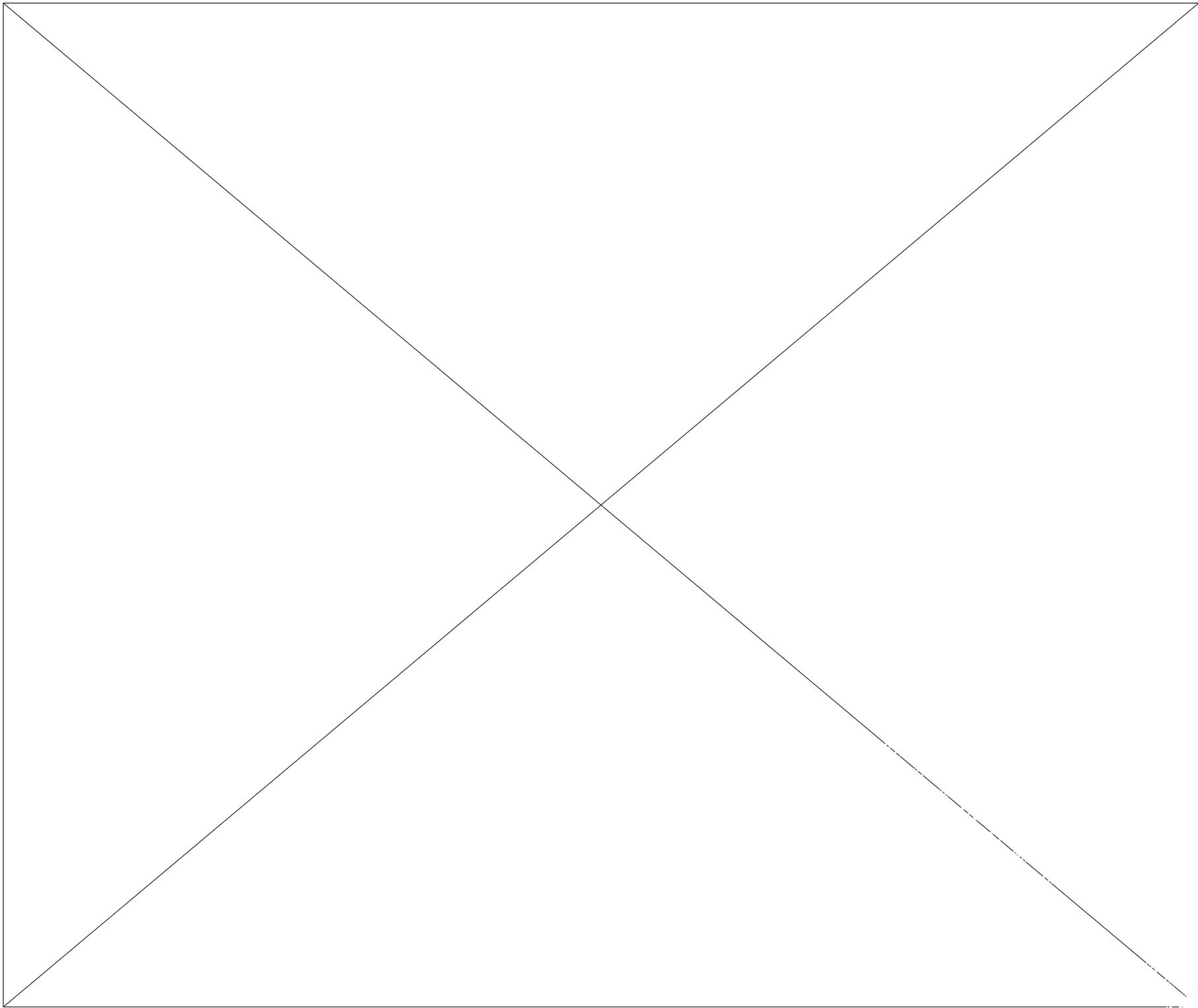
Who Are We?

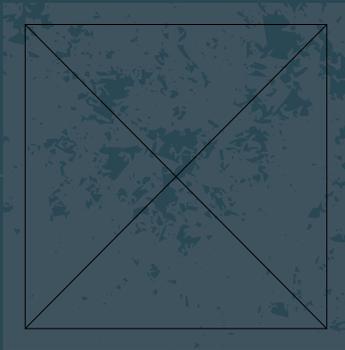
Who Are We?

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the North.

Our members share resources, facilities, and expertise to build post-secondary education programs that are relevant and accessible to northern students. Our overall goal is to create a strong, sustainable circumpolar region by empowering northerners and northern communities through education and shared knowledge.

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





“Sustainable development in the North can only be supported by a strong, educated public. A priority of educational and research institutions should be the cultivation and communication of indigenous knowledge; further, to both facilitate and strengthen the ability of indigenous peoples to participate in the development process.”

Sergey Kharuchi
President, Russian Association of
Indigenous Peoples of the North
(RAIPON)



Our Values

Regional identity...

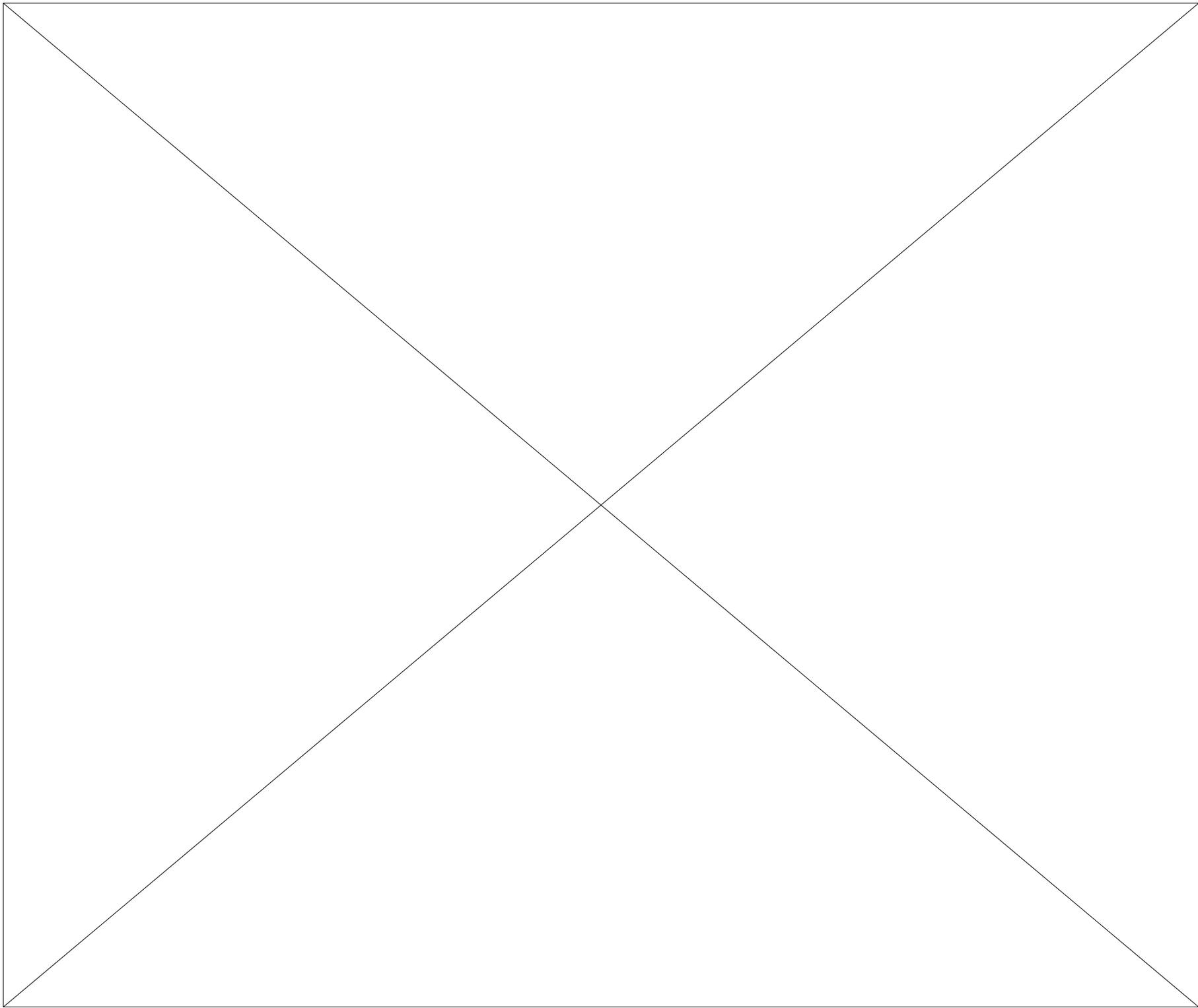
UArctic shall promote a northern voice in the globalizing world that reflects a shared regional identity across all eight Arctic states and among all Arctic cultures and peoples.

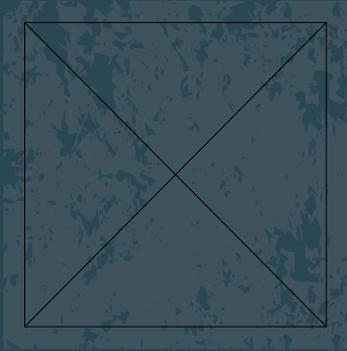
Interdisciplinarity ...

UArctic shall promote an understanding between different learning systems, bringing together perspectives from both social and natural sciences, and from traditional knowledge to foster an approach based on issues and needs rather than disciplines.

Diversity...

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





"UArctic can achieve its goals only through its members, and their engagement and enthusiasm for the sustainable development of the Circumpolar North. UArctic's programs are developed and implemented by members throughout the Circumpolar World, valuing both conventional academic and traditional indigenous knowledge systems, for the benefit of northerners and their communities."

Lars Kullerud
Director, University of the Arctic



Our Vision In the North, for the North, by the North

Northerners are empowered with
the tools to shape our own future

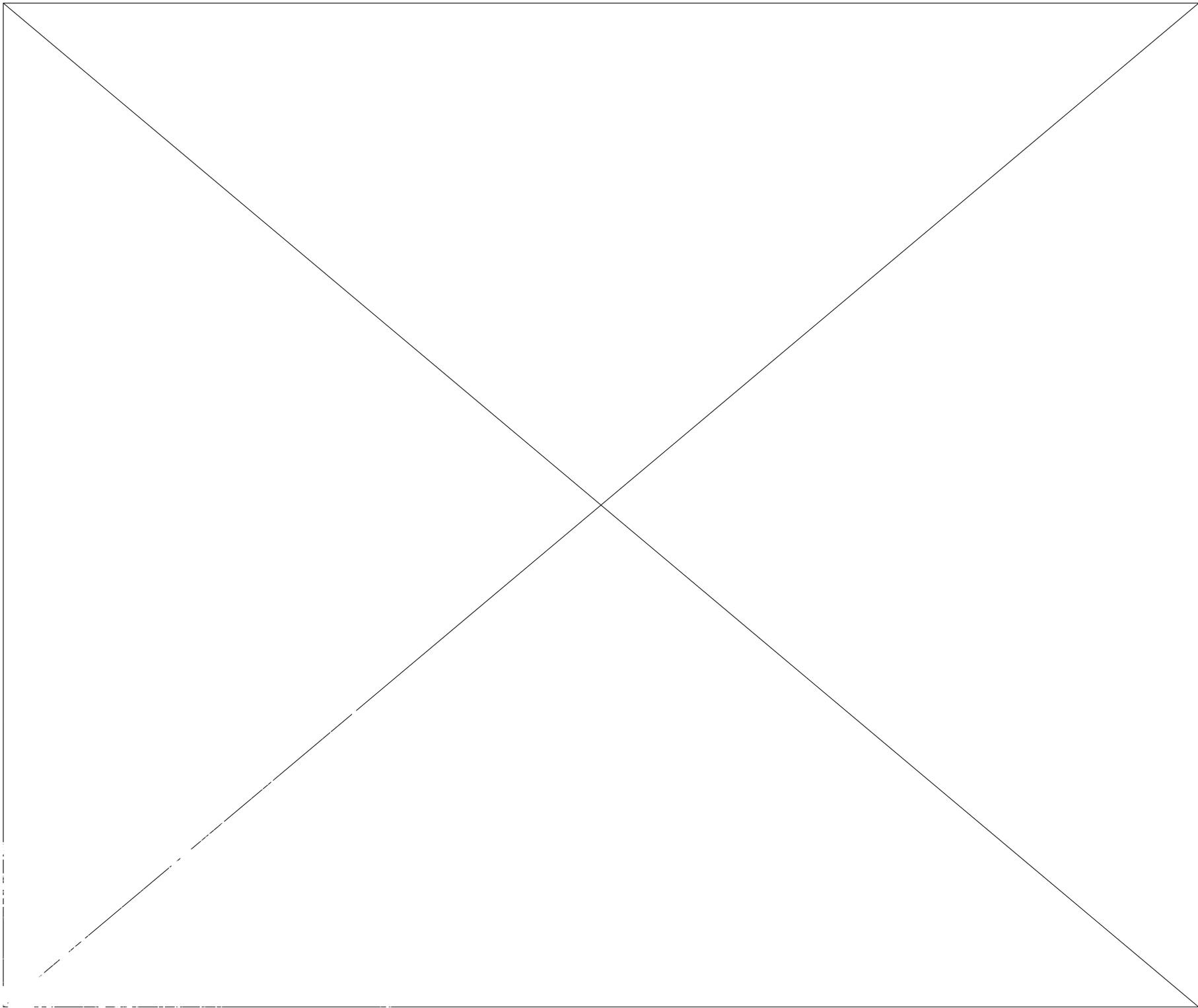
Our Organization

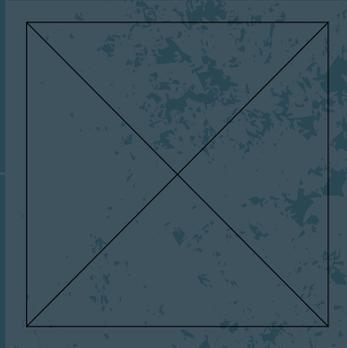
The highest decision making body in UArctic is the international Board of Governors. The Board has responsibility for the overall strategic development, institutional priorities, and finances of UArctic. The UArctic Council, consisting of representatives of all members, appoints the Board members, decides on UArctic membership, gives academic guidance, and acts as a forum for consulting and cooperating on the implementation of UArctic programs through its members.

The University of the Arctic is a decentralized organization; all offices, programs and other functions are hosted or run by member institutions. The daily operations are entrusted to a light and distributed administration consisting of the Director, International Secretariat and International Academic Office.

UArctic's operations are focussed on five Strategic Areas: Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, Mobility, Access, and Knowledge and Dialogue. Each of these consists of one or more programs, lead by a Program Chair. Program Chairs are responsible for all operations of their program, including budget management and reporting on program activities. Many programs have program offices, which are hosted by member institutions.

In order to ensure the continued operation and delivery of UArctic programs and courses, stable long-term funding for our Circumpolar Studies courses, the north2north student mobility program, student support offices, program chairs, as well as a light management structure are a priority. Shorter term funding is normally sought for new course or program development. Member institutions cover the cost of services to students, including on-campus delivery of programs and some program development as well as in-kind support to UArctic offices.





"We all need more opportunities to study and learn about our environment. It's vital nowadays to make sure the Arctic's educational potential is secured for the future. Education is a power for people, a key for better life in some way. That is why an institution like UArctic is crucial to the people of the Arctic - it offers an education in the context of the Circumpolar North and further defines an Arctic resident's way of life."

Ekaterina Evseyeva

Student Representative to UArctic Board of Governors



Our Goals

Guided by our vision and our values, the University of the Arctic seeks to...

1. Empower the North...

Empower the residents of the Circumpolar North by building human capital through higher education.

2. Improve Access to Education...

Reduce barriers to higher education in the North in order to provide increased opportunities for northerners.

3. Serve Our Community...

Develop initiatives in partnership with our community, and particularly with indigenous peoples, that are responsive to their needs and support their aspirations.

4. Create Shared Knowledge...

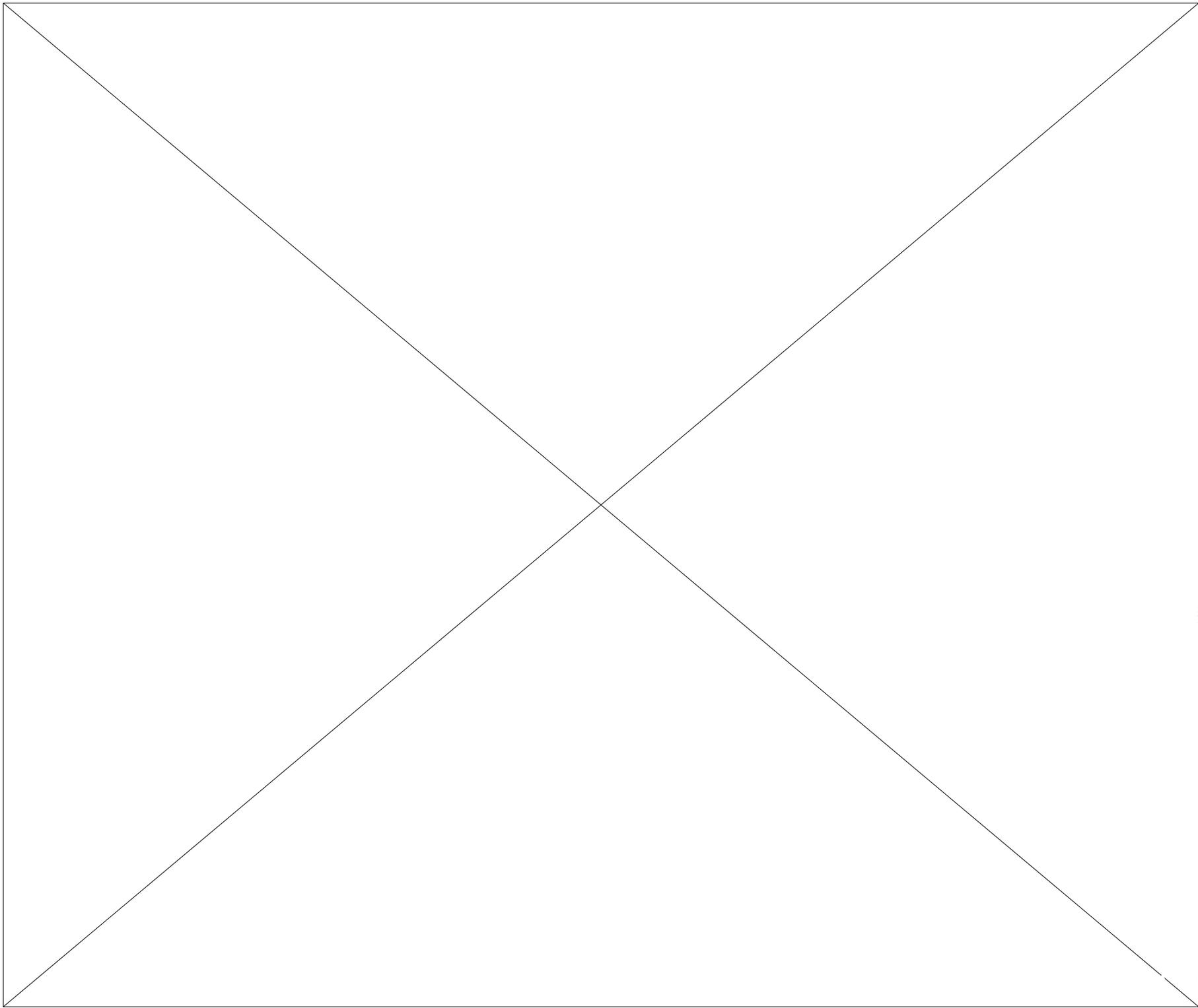
Create shared knowledge and provide quality discussion on contemporary issues related to the Circumpolar North.

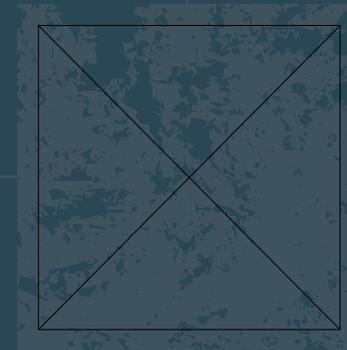
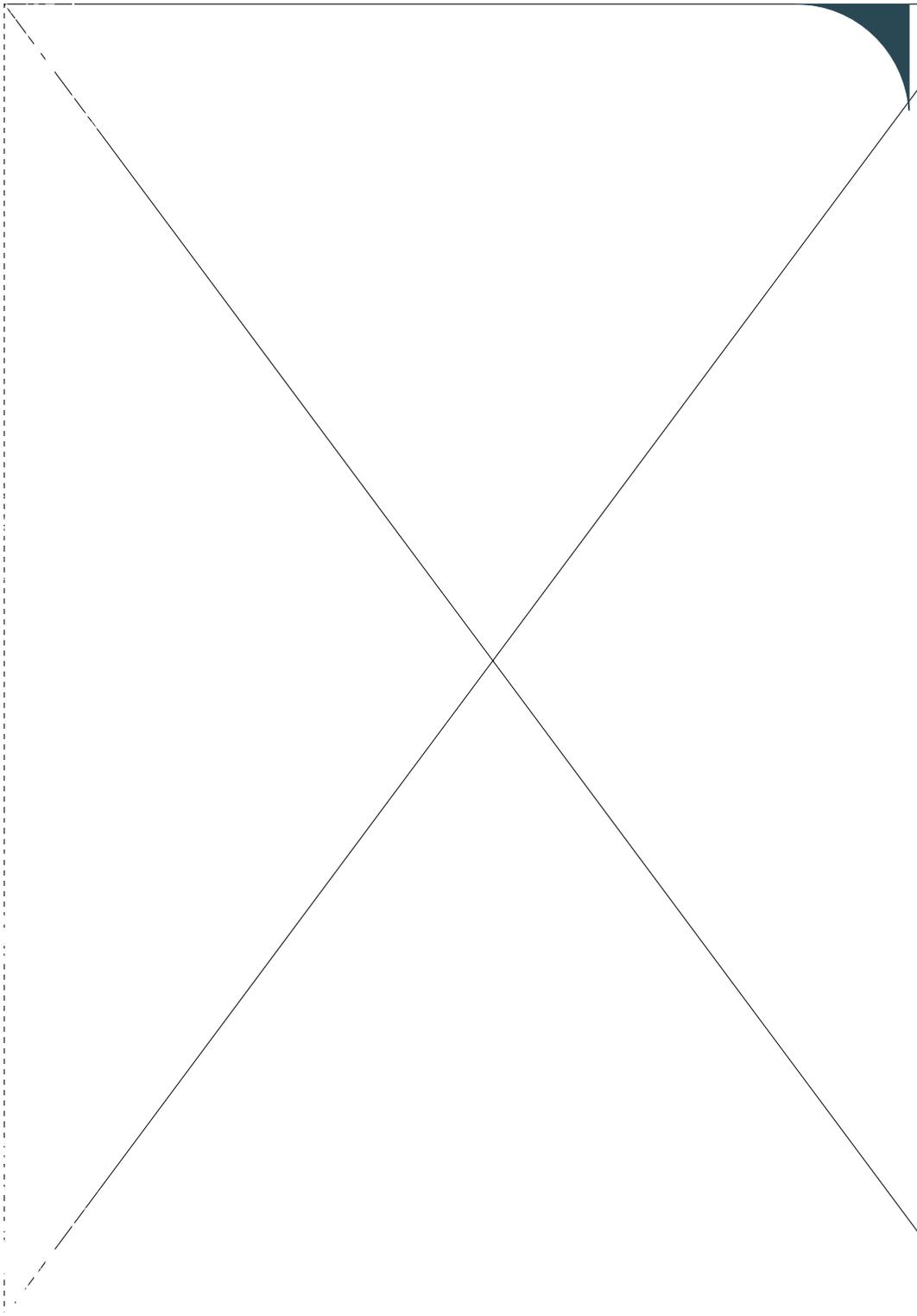
5. Build Regional Identity...

Build a shared regional identity while valuing inclusiveness and respect for diversity across the region.

6. Strengthen the Voice of the Arctic...

Strengthen the Circumpolar North's role in the world by increasing knowledge about Arctic issues.





“One of the key priorities of UArctic is to assist, through education, the development of sustainable regional economies. This priority cannot be met in the North without developing the capacity to develop and deliver northern focused educational programming.”

Ms. Mary Simon

Canada's former Ambassador of Circumpolar Affairs, former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, and member of UArctic Board of Governors.

Our Foundation

The University of the Arctic was initiated by the governments of the Arctic Council member countries as well as the member organizations it serves. The Ministers of the Arctic Council stated in the Iqualuit Declaration of 1998:

The Ministers, “welcome, and are pleased to announce the establishment of the University of the Arctic, a university without walls...”

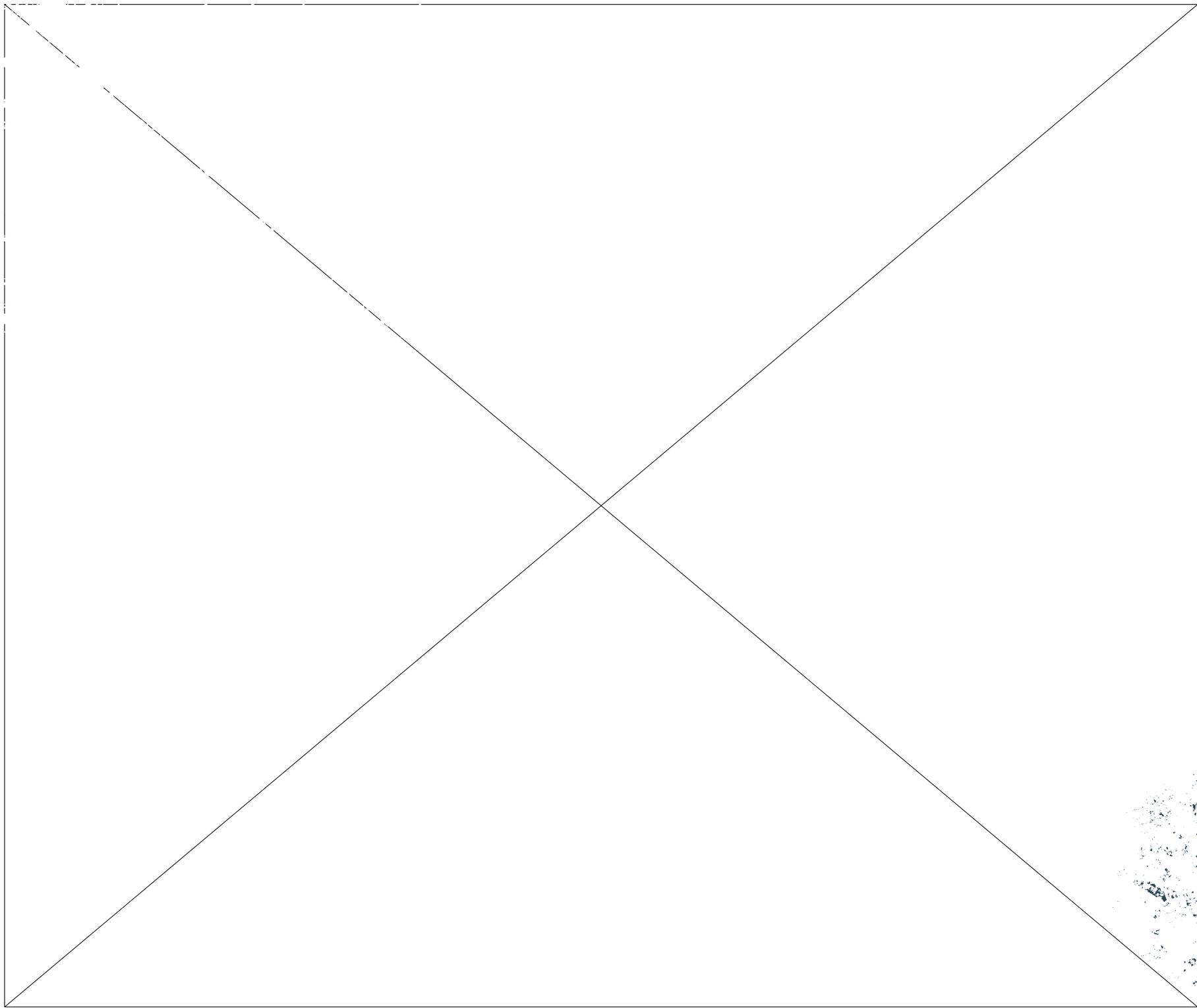
The governments of the Arctic Council member states and the Permanent Participant Organizations have continued to affirm their support for the UArctic through the Arctic Council. The UArctic was officially launched in Finland in June 2001 and the commitment to support UArctic was reconfirmed in the Inari Declaration in 2002:

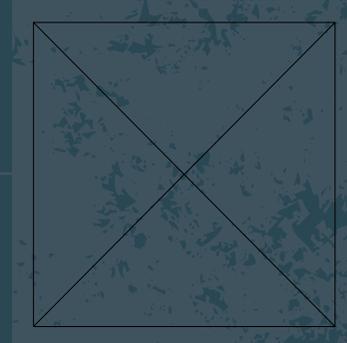
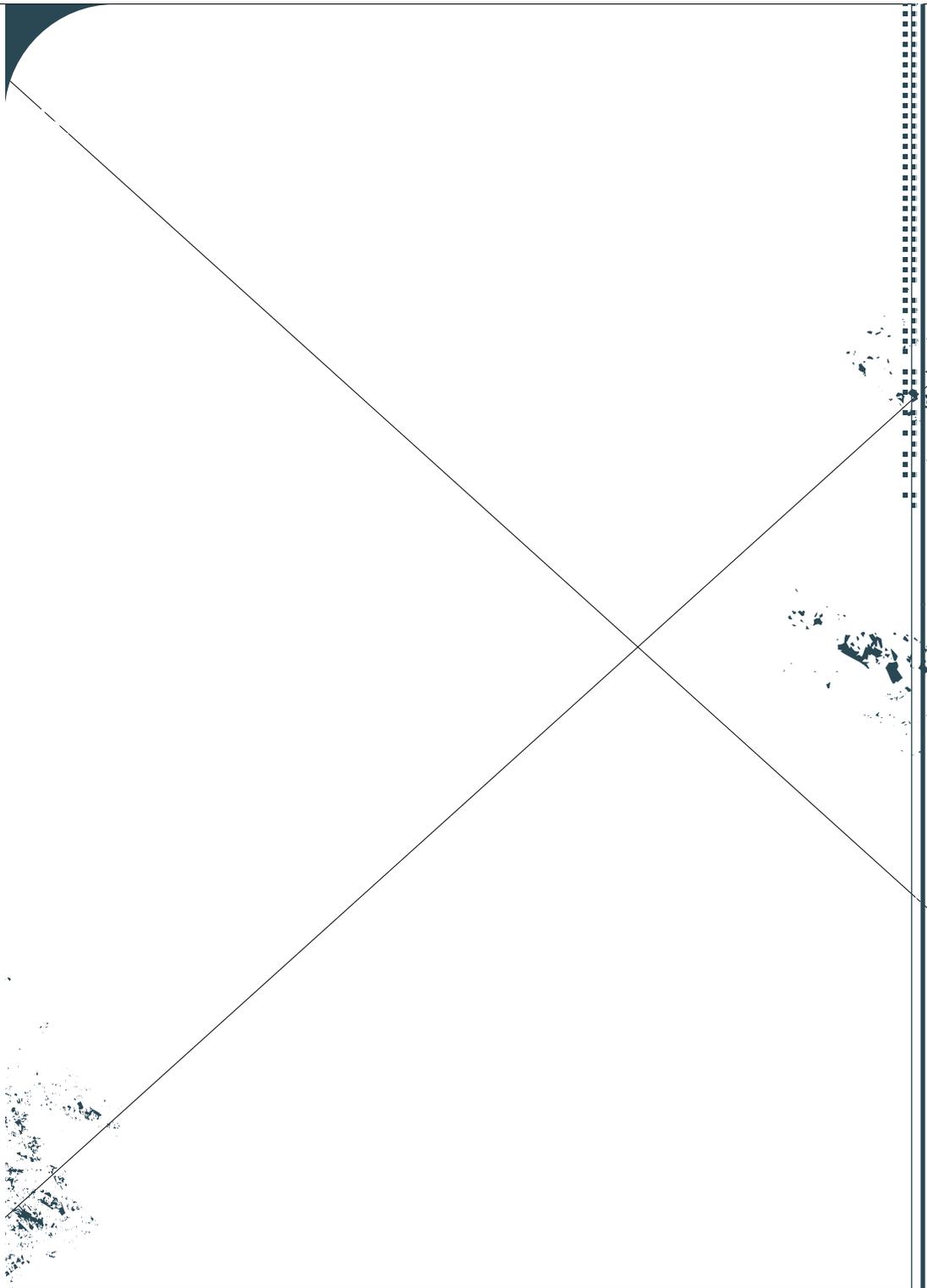
The Ministers, “welcome the good progress of the University of the Arctic and encourage appropriate authorities in the Arctic states to increase their efforts to secure financing of the core activities of the UArctic.”

At the first meeting of the Ministers of Education and Science from the Arctic Council member countries in Reykjavik, June 2004, representatives agreed to focus on existing education institutions and research organizations, give priority to cooperation in higher education and research, increase mobility among researchers and students, and involve young researchers of indigenous origin in national and international research and scientific exchange programs. Further, they

“applauded the efforts of the University of the Arctic to raise awareness and to improve understanding of the natural and cultural circumstances of the Arctic through its different education programs.”

The Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions have expressed unwavering support for UArctic throughout its history. This continuing support has been vitally important for the creation and growth of UArctic, its programs and projects, from our foundation and into the future.





“Students in the North have different learning needs and must overcome different obstacles to get a university education than do students in the South. The Circumpolar Studies Program fits the student, instead of making the student fit the program. Sustainable development, economic opportunity, and preservation of culture go hand-in-hand with relevant and accessible education. What we’re trying to achieve through the program is a brighter future for all Northerners.”

Greg Poelzer
Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
University of the Arctic



Our Programs

Undergraduate Studies

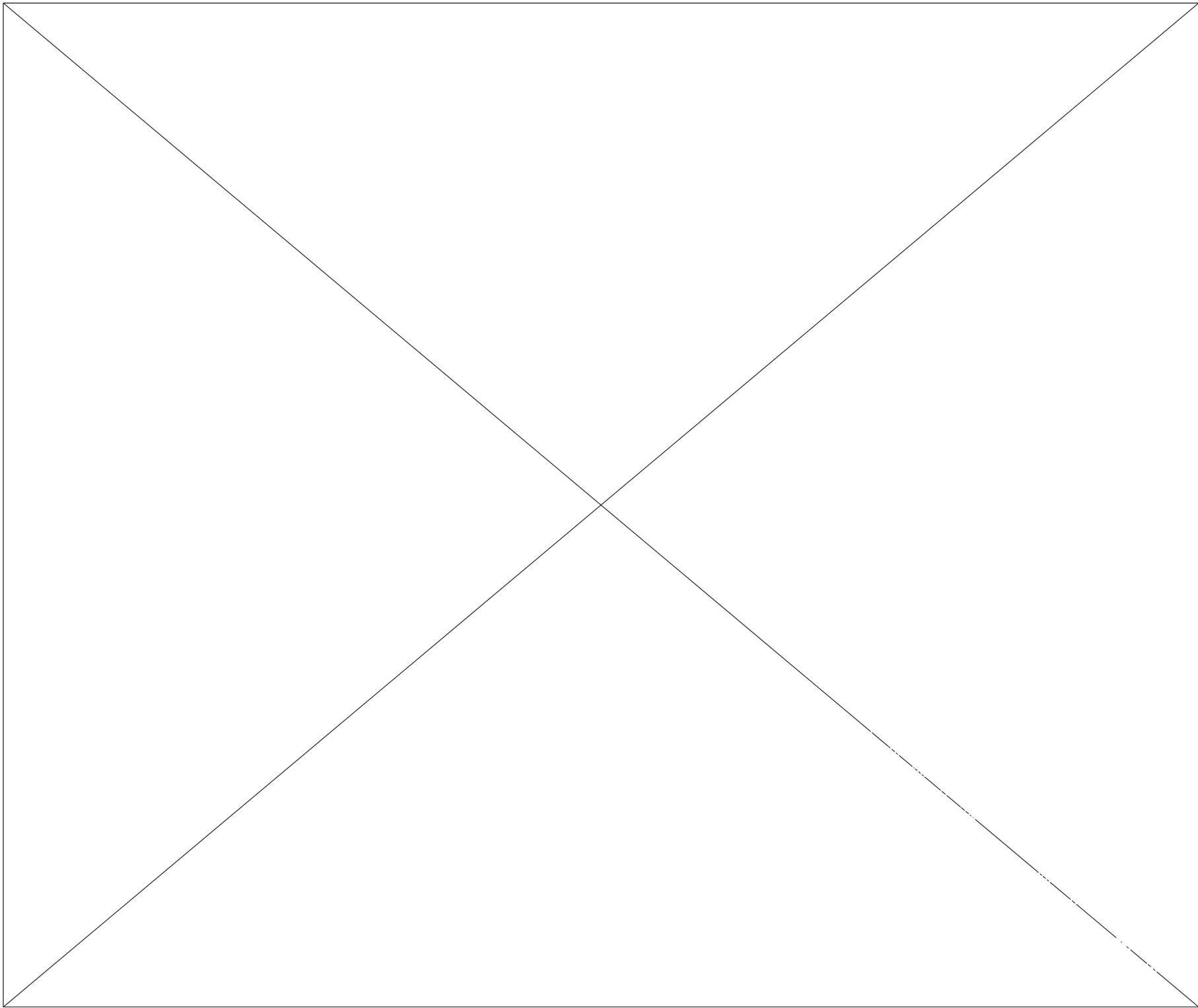
Undergraduate Studies includes programs that focus on building human capital and knowledge about the North among its residents and others. These programs address the full continuum of learning through both traditional and new approaches, and implement life-long learning strategies to empower northerners with the tools needed to shape our own future. BCS education programs are developed, in partnership with indigenous peoples, with an aim to support all northerner's needs for community development.

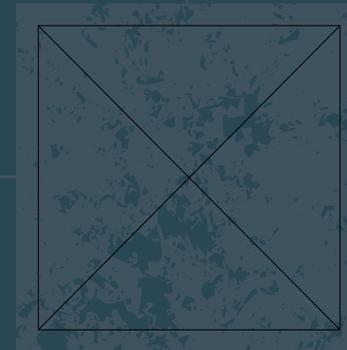
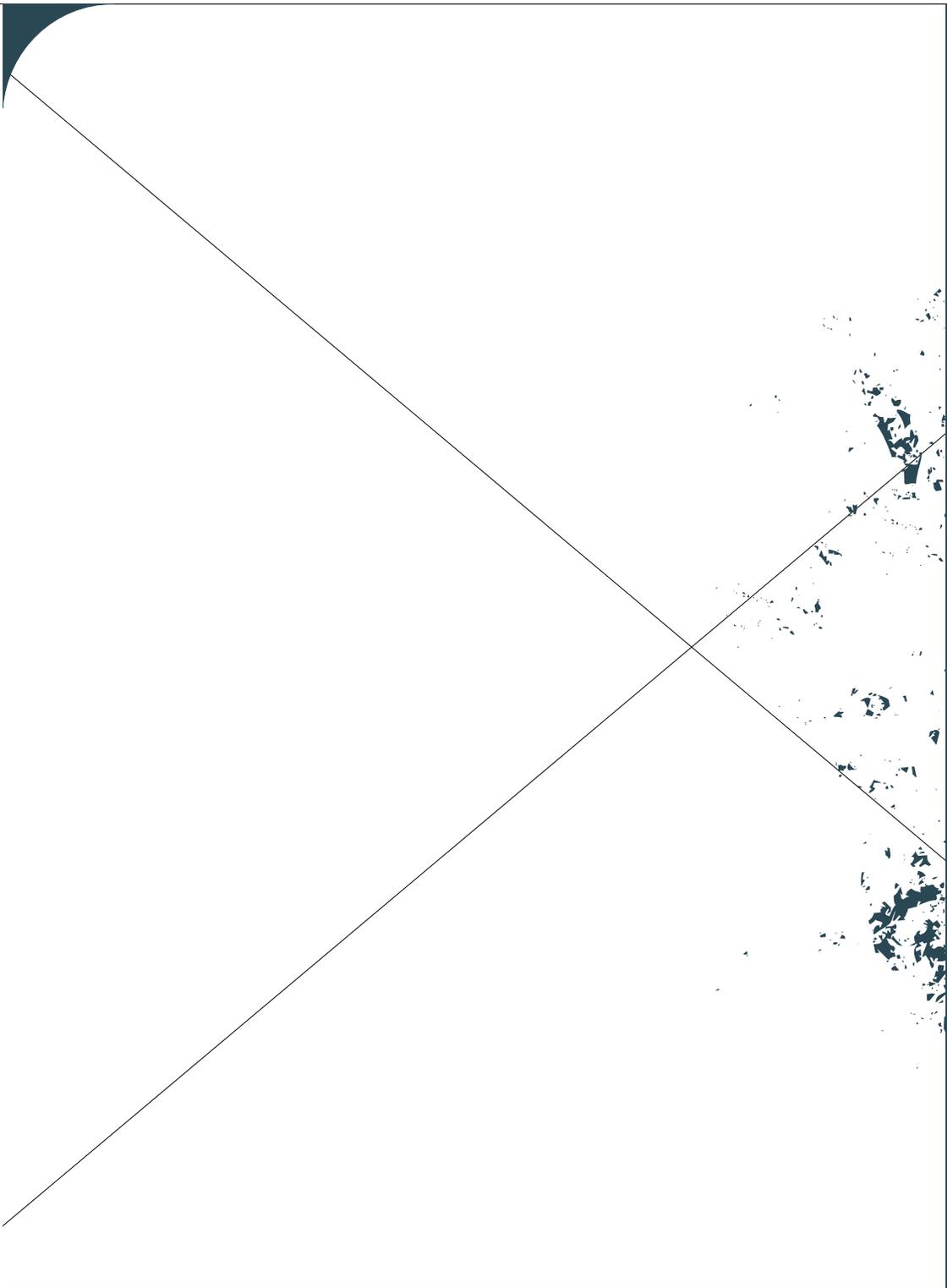
Circumpolar Studies (BCS)

The Circumpolar Studies Program is a new way for students attending University of the Arctic to learn about the North, with courses held in the classroom, online, in the field, and around the world. Using both academic and traditional indigenous knowledge, the Circumpolar Studies program gives students an opportunity to learn about the lands, peoples, and issues of the Circumpolar World. It prepares students for advanced study or professional employment in diverse fields, such as sustainable resource management, self-government, Arctic engineering, and northern tourism.

Open Learning

Focusing on shorter and more practical courses and skills training, Open Learning approaches fit well with the needs of northern communities, and will be applied to deliver higher education to northerners as a supplement to the traditional university program structure. This program area promotes new routes of access to higher education, thereby increasing participation. Open Learning will also allow northern institutions to provide improved knowledge about the Arctic to the world and to southern students.





"It is a privilege to live and do research in the Arctic. International multi-scientific cooperation has made it possible to assess the magnitude and impacts of global warming. The Arctic environment is particularly sensitive to the climate change and glaciers tell the same harsh story."



Anna Sinisalo
PhD Student, Glaciology,
Rovaniemi, Finland

Our Programs

Graduate Studies

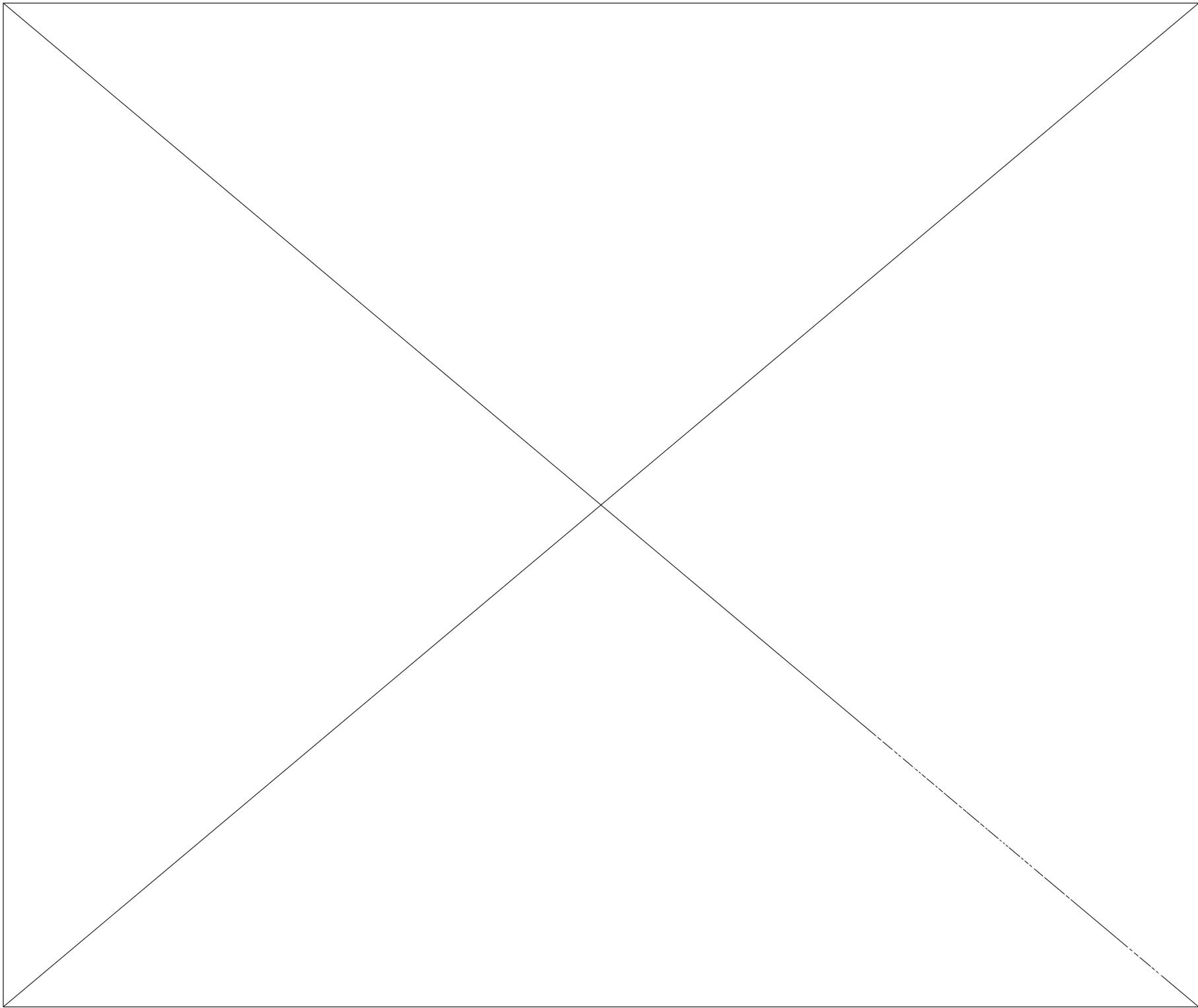
Graduate Studies programs focus on networking between northern students, improving the cooperation and sharing of education capacity among member institutions, as well as improving the quality and relevance of existing graduate studies programs. The programs shall support and build the next generation of northern researchers and other experts, including the creation of new opportunities for indigenous peoples to take an active part in Arctic research.

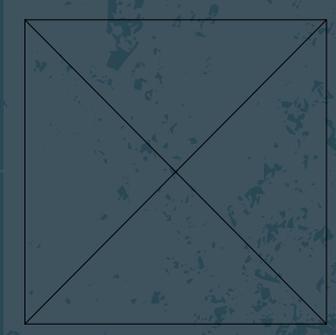
Field School

The UArctic Field School incorporates a selection of short, thematically-focused courses that provide training for young researchers at member institutions in relevant fields. The Field School provides specialized study in authentic northern locations, organized by northern institutions.

PhD Networks

PhD Networks promote regional cooperation and identity among advanced students, build an academic community among northern researchers, and develop opportunities for education and communication with policy-makers.





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“The north2north program has provided me with opportunities I never before thought possible. In travelling to Murmansk, Russia, I have met so many wonderful people and cannot praise enough the hospitality extended to me so far. My only concern is that I reciprocate their kindness with appropriate grace and gratitude.”

So much is happening here and it seems that the closer I get to the time that I am to leave, the more activity I am involved in. I’ve volunteered with the city’s sister city international program and with the international and foreign languages program. I’ve recently started to lecture at the Murmansk Humanities institute my classes are full of third and fourth year foreign language students who speak English. I am grateful that they are very kind in having to endure my sad attempts at wit and cleverness.

I miss my country but I have managed to bring a lot of it with me, in my heart, to share. It is very exciting to be here.”

Robin A. Ranger

north2north student from Lakehead University (Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada) in Murmansk, Russia



Our Programs

Mobility

Mobility is crucial to creating shared knowledge and building a shared regional identity. Mobility is an efficient means for coordination and collaboration among our often small member institutions. Furthermore, it is an efficient way to increase knowledge about Arctic issues in the world. UArctic Mobility programs shall promote and implement increased mobility among teachers, researchers, interns and students, while emphasizing the participation of northerners who traditionally have had limited access to mobility.

north2north

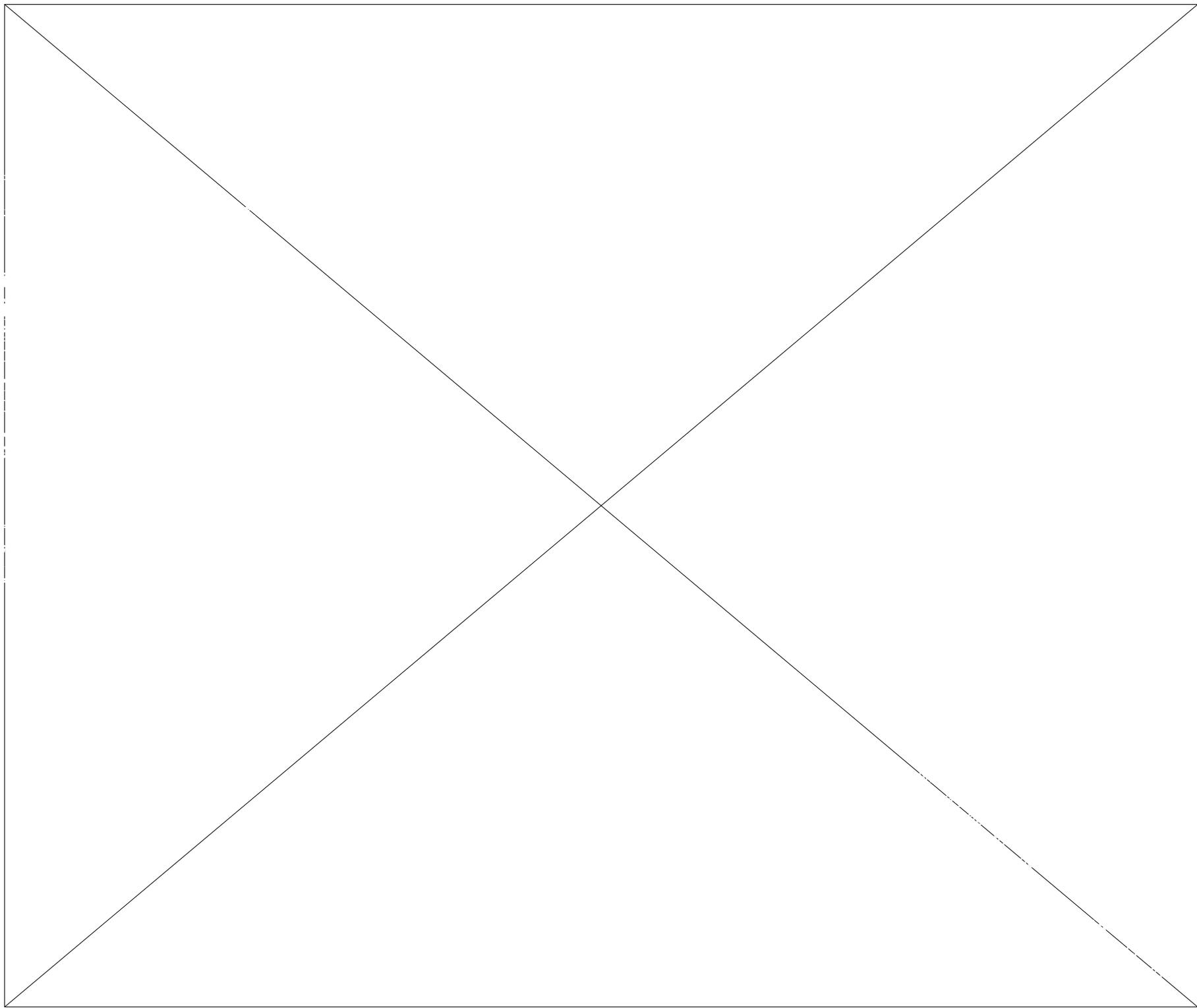
The north2north student exchange program provides opportunities for students to experience different northern regions firsthand, and to share experiences face-to-face by allowing students to study at other UArctic institutions. The program operates in close collaboration with the faculty exchange program to build mutual cooperation that can sustain and support student exchange.

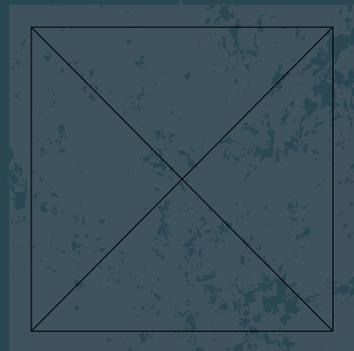
northTREX

The faculty exchange program, northTREX, provides opportunities for northern teachers to gain circumpolar experiences and strengthens northern institutions' abilities to share faculty resources. Faculty assignments are usually linked to UArctic Thematic Networks and student exchange in the north2north program.

Go North

The best way to learn about the north is to “Go North”. The Go North program acts as a ‘window’ for UArctic member institutions to promote the unique educational opportunities available in the Arctic, and to interest future global leaders in learning about the North, from the North, and in the North.





“Improving access to higher education through the use of ICTs is vitally important in the North. Education should be available to every northerner, no matter how geographically remote.”

Thorsteinn Gunnarsson
Rector, University of Akureyri, Iceland



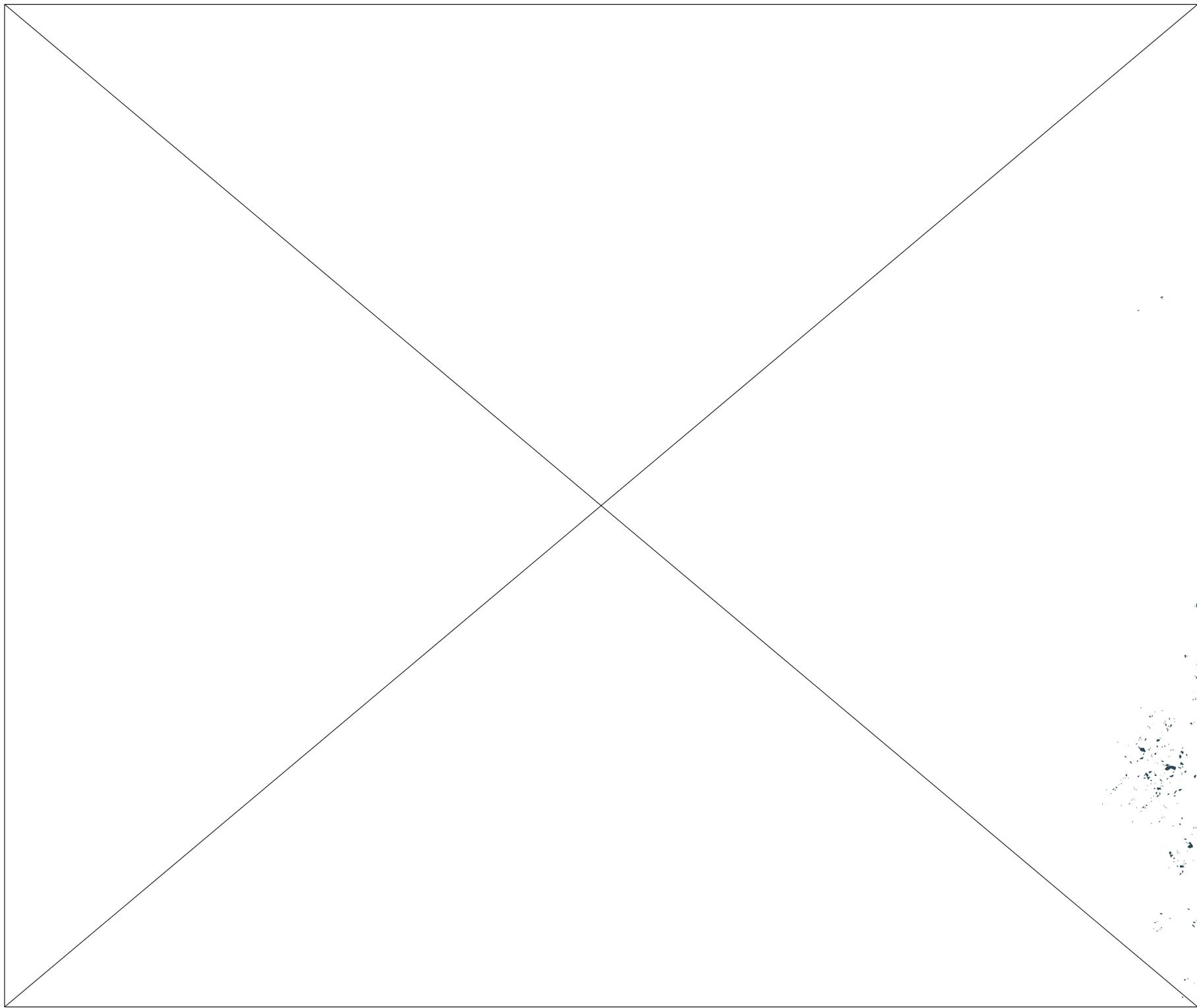
Our Programs

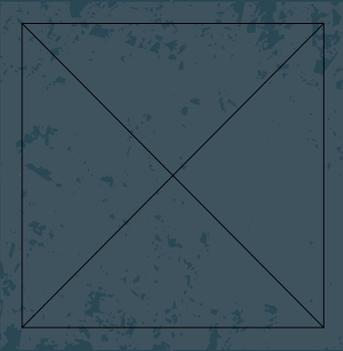
Access

The geographical, physical, and cultural challenges of the Arctic require special efforts to deliver education that is accessible to all northerners. Information and communications technologies (ICT) offer future possibilities, but the lack of basic ICT services in the most rural areas of the Arctic is still an enormous challenge to accessible education. UArctic is constantly looking for new and innovative ways to improve access to higher education for northerners.

Arctic Learning Environment

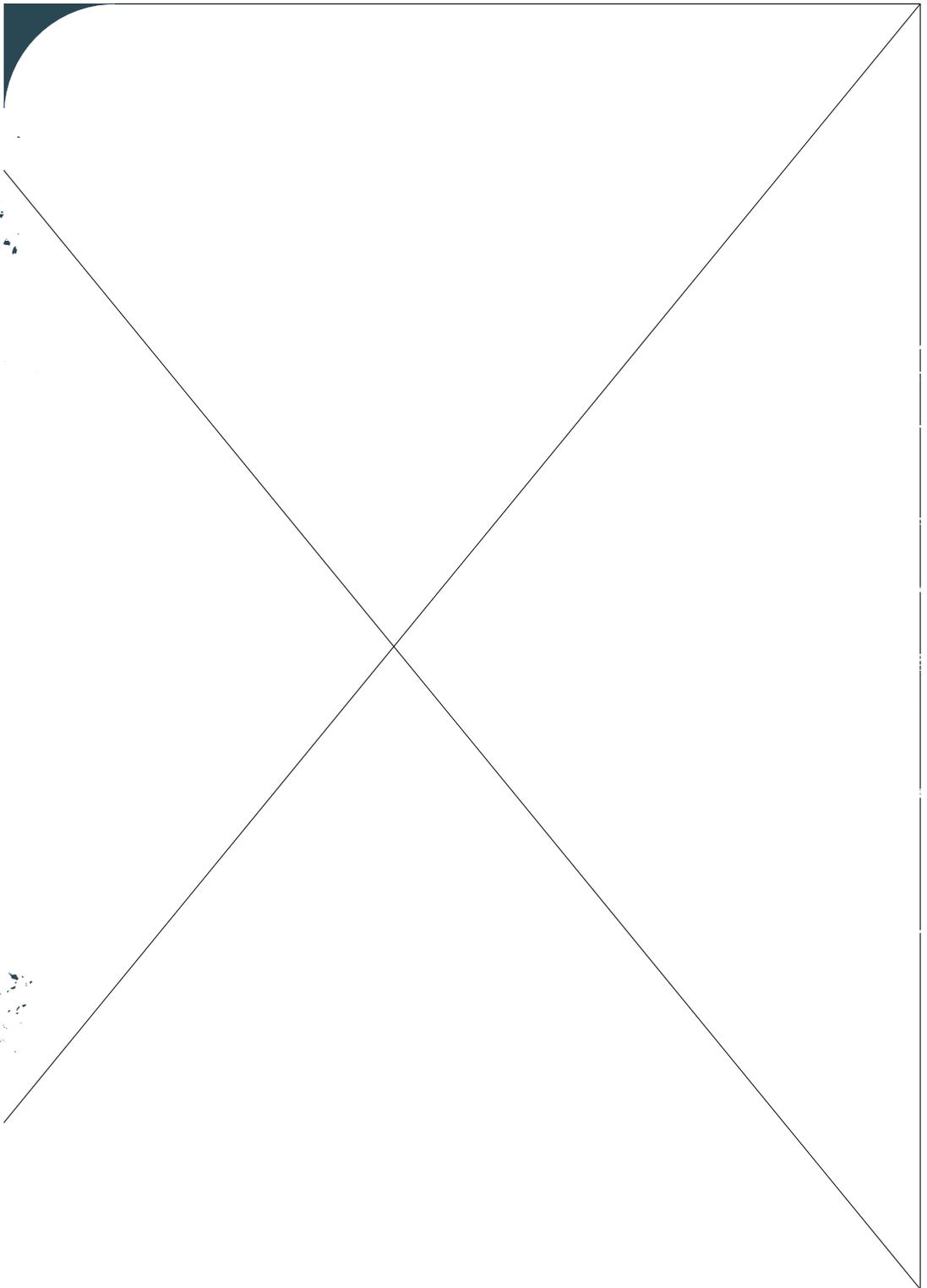
The ALE program focuses on finding ways to allow northerners to overcome distance to learn in the North, including finding new and innovative means to overcome cultural barriers and physical distance. The program also seeks to identify relevant and new pedagogical and technological approaches to learning processes to support the delivery of content across the great distances of the region. In the Arctic, people are the most valuable resource; thus, only ICTs that empower people in the process of human capacity building are sustainable.





“What can we learn from each other? What can we teach each other? How can we advance each others research interests? Answers to these questions are what networks of, and dialogue among scientists provide – starting points for new research, a shared knowledge base, and hope for future collaboration. Such networks can only better our chances for understanding.”

Peter Sköld
Professor, Umeå University, Sweden





Our Programs

Knowledge and Dialogue

Together, northerners possess a vast amount of knowledge about their region. By bringing northerners and their experiences together, Knowledge and Dialogue programs generate new ideas and new understandings, which in turn form the basis of our education programs. UArctic's Knowledge and Dialogue programs complement existing communities of international scientific research in the Arctic, and strengthen northerners' roles in those activities. This dialogue also extends beyond the North, as many groups outside the region have a strong interest in its future.

Northern Research Forum

The Northern Research Forum (NRF) is a forum for open discussion among policymakers, business people and other interest groups, the international community, and the research community, directed by its own Steering Committee. The NRF organizes a biennial Open Meeting and other discussion fora that address issues, problems, and opportunities facing northern peoples and societies in the contexts of social, political, and environmental changes, and economic globalization. The NRF is also a process with enthusiasm for fresh ideas and research findings, and bringing researchers and other experts together.

Thematic Networks

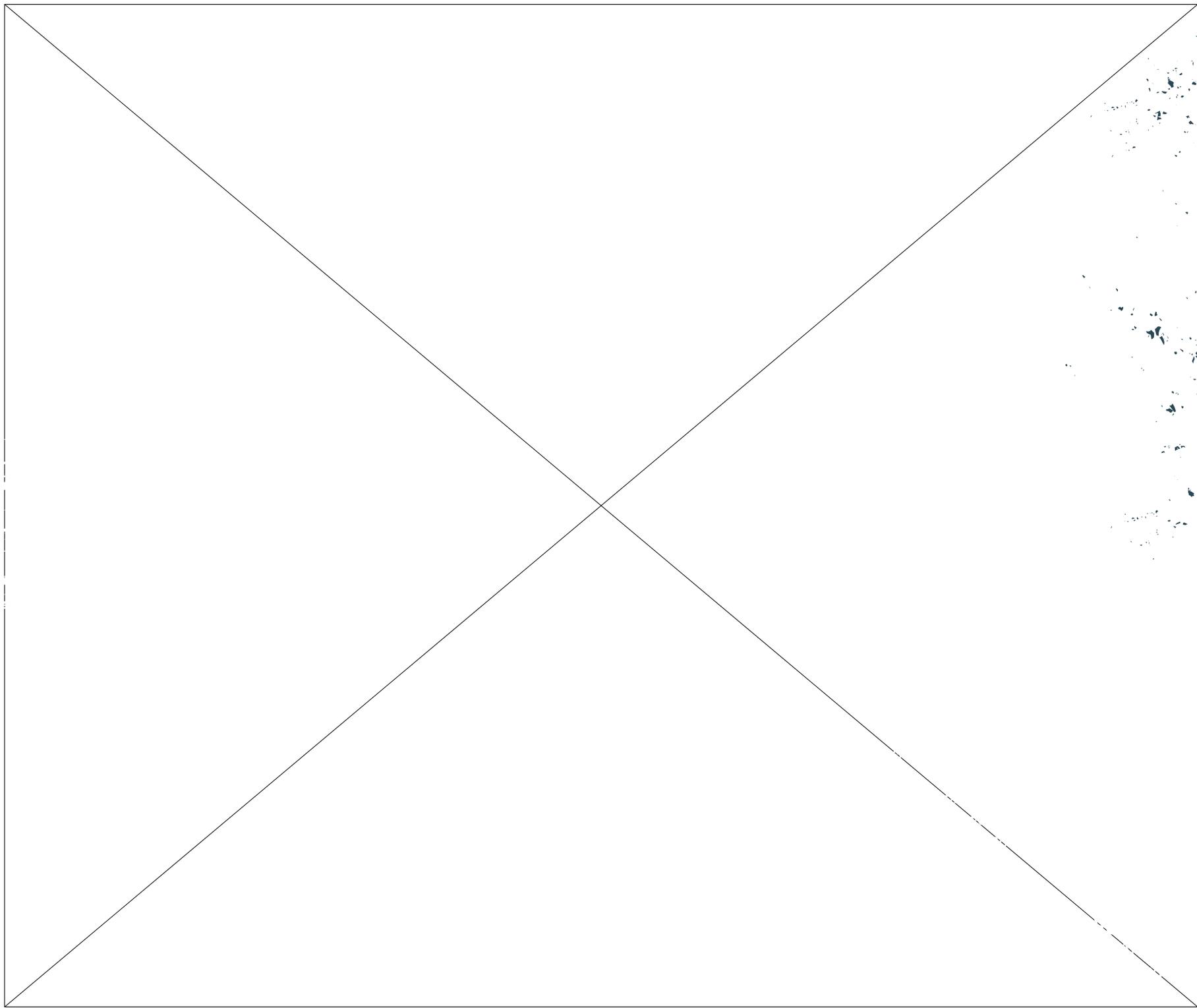
Thematic Networks encourage the cooperation of faculty from different institutions on subjects of shared interest among UArctic members. UArctic Thematic Networks are central to stimulating joint curriculum development, sharing of resources, and are important tools to developing stable relations that form the backbone of student exchange.

Circumpolar Universities Association

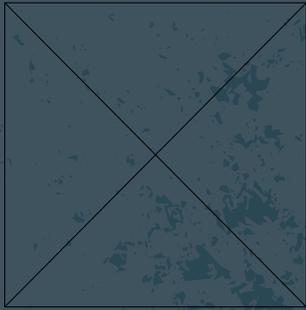
The Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) is a membership organization directed by its own Steering Committee, which consists of universities and other institutes of higher learning and research in the Circumpolar North whose purpose is to enhance cooperation between its member institutions. CUA organizes the biennial Circumpolar Universities Cooperation Conference.

Mimir - Research Outreach Program

The University of the Arctic is working closely with existing organizations and institutions engaged in international Arctic science and research. Mimir ensures linkages between existing communities of international scientific research in the Arctic and our members, and strengthens northerners' roles in those activities. Furthermore, Mimir seeks to ensure integration of education programs and ongoing and planned research and science activities.



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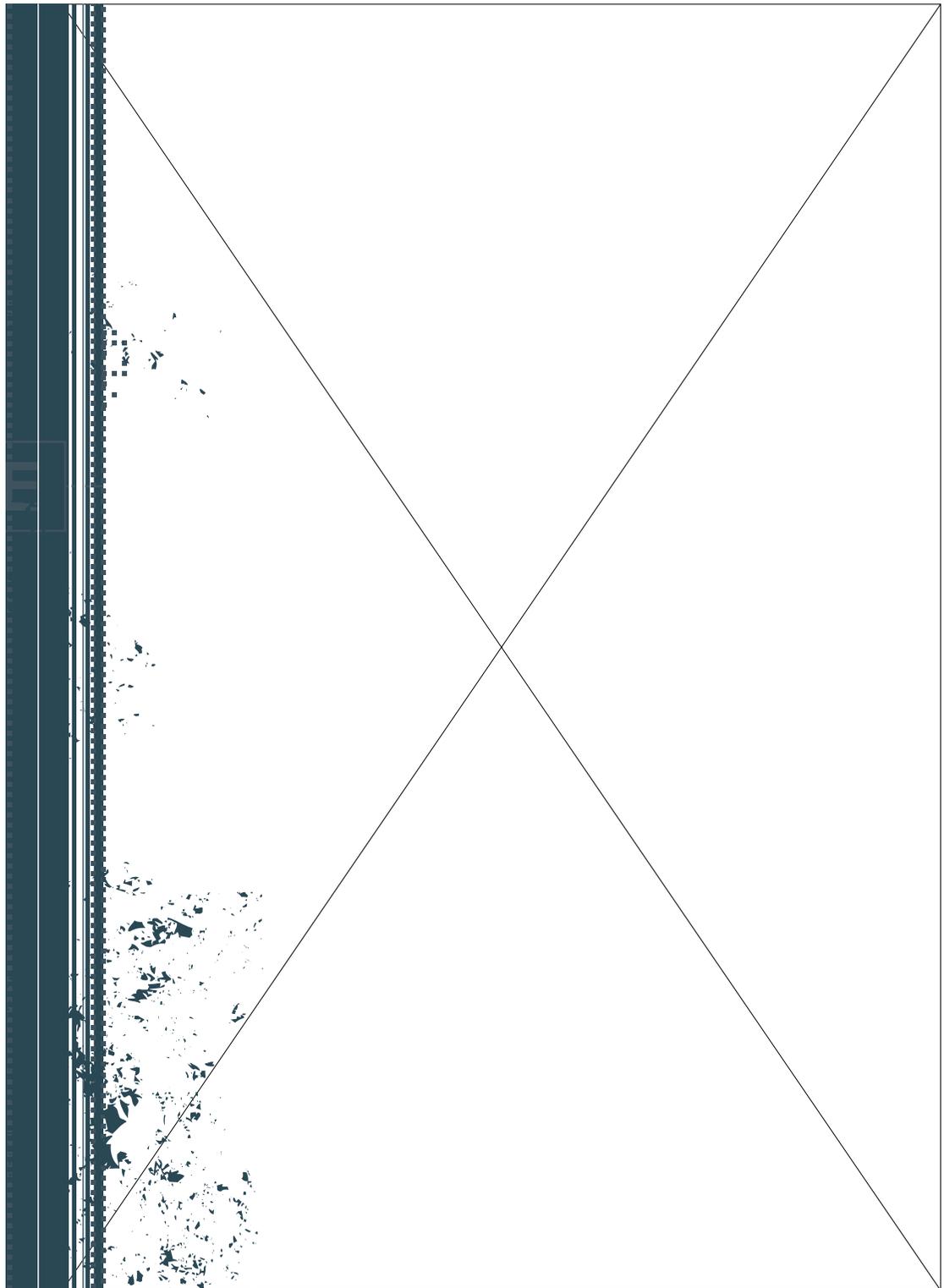


“To increase awareness of Arctic issues, and to generate further research on those issues, it is imperative to educate a new generation of students who are capable of addressing the complex interdisciplinary issues facing the Arctic.

Innovative educational initiatives, such as the University of the Arctic, help to build circumpolar networks of students and faculty working in various scientific fields. These networks provide a strong base for cooperation and future research, and can only help to further understanding and scholarship of Arctic issues.”

Richard Caulfield

Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks



History of UArctic

In March 1997, prompted by Arctic Council discussions on the topic of Arctic higher education, a proposal was made to the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) of the Arctic Council regarding a 'University of the Arctic.' This proposal envisaged a geographically dispersed institution that combined the strengths of existing establishments by bringing together students and staff. Benefits would include the sharing of Arctic knowledge, costs of expensive and/or underused facilities, and expanded opportunities for access to education among the region's residents, in particular, for the indigenous peoples of the region.

The official launch of UArctic occurred in Rovaniemi, Finland, on June 12, 2001, in conjunction with the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Rovaniemi process. In the years following the launch, membership has increased steadily and the administrative structures to support governance and programs have been consolidated. UArctic's programs and activities have steadily progressed from the planning stage to full implementation.

This document is a revised version of the Strategic Plan from 2003. The modifications include small changes in the organizational structure as well as revised program descriptions.

