UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Meric S. Gertler, CM, FRSC, FBA, FAcSS
President

February 27, 2023

University of the Arctic
International Secretariat
c/o University of Lapland
PO Box 122
96101 Rovaniemi FINLAND

Dear Secretariat of the University of the Arctic:

I am writing on behalf of the University of Toronto (U of T) to express our interest in becoming a member of the University of the Arctic (UArctic). The University of Toronto, established in 1827, is Canada's top university and a leader in research, innovation, and education. We are keen to contribute, through both research and education, to a thriving international Arctic.

The University of Toronto is also deeply committed to meaningful engagement with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals and communities in Canada, and to collaboration with Indigenous Peoples across the globe. We take responsibility for active reconciliation and are working across the University towards the Calls to Action arising from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This commitment is extremely important and relevant to participation in Arctic research, innovation, and education. We recognize the importance of Indigenous leadership, and meaningful partnership, along with the rich histories and knowledges that are crucial to Arctic flourishing. We strive to support Indigenous students, faculty, and researchers to lead and engage in research and education. The Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health at U of T's Dalla Lana School of Public Health exemplifies the stance we bring to partnering with Indigenous communities, and this stance would shape our approach to membership in the UArctic. Similarly, the Indigenous Research Network, launched in 2021, connects students and researchers across the University, such as Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos, Canada Research Chair in Critical Studies in Indigenous Health and Social Action on Suicide at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, whose work focuses on mental health and social policy in Indigenous communities, including in Nunavut, Canada.

Our commitment to Arctic research is demonstrated by the work of approximately 25 core researchers and many co-investigators and graduate students, who are making significant contributions to the Arctic in diverse areas such as health and technology, environmental science, architecture, and the arts. In the field of climate and environmental sciences, for example, we have a strong presence with research programs in the departments of Physics, Geography, Chemical and Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences. Our researchers, such as Professor Paul Kushner, are connected to the Canadian Sea Ice and Snow Evolution Network (CanSISE.ca), and Dr. Kimberly Strong, Chair of the Department of Physics, was a founding member of the Canadian Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Change (CANDAC), which established the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory (PEARL) at Eureka,

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Nunavut. Dr. Irena Creed and Dr. Kent Moore, Vice Principals of Research and Innovation, have both made significant contributions to Arctic science, in watershed science and ice-atmosphere-ocean interactions, respectively, and are supportive of membership in the UArctic.

Arctic research across health disciplines is also a strength at the University of Toronto. Dr. Allison Crawford is active within the Arctic Council in suicide prevention, public health, and health policy. Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos is leading projects in Indigenous approaches to suicide prevention and mental wellbeing, including in the Canadian Arctic. Dr. Alex Mihailidis and Dr. Crawford both lead programs of research in health technologies within Northern Canada, including international Arctic collaborations. Others important research priorities include reproductive and sexual health, led by Dr. Carmen Logie at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, and nutrition and chronic illness, led by Dr. Tracey Galloway in the Department of Anthropology.

Arts and humanities-focused Arctic research is an important emerging area of scholarship, Dr. Mark Cheetham, in the Department of Art History, leads a working group on Visual Cultures of the Circumpolar North at the Jackman Humanities Institute. Ms. Lisa Boivin, Dene artist and PhD candidate, brings together bioethics and the land-based practices of Dene medicine through her paintings and writing.

Architecture of the Arctic is another area of research strength. At the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, Professor Mason White leads a research group that understands architecture as a mutable territory that is formed out of and responsive to its environment and history. Lateral Office, the design practice he founded, was awarded Special Mention from the international jury for the project “Arctic Adaptations,” at the 2014 Venice Biennale in Architecture. His research has also included studies on housing in Nunavut.

In addition to our research, the University of Toronto offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, consistently ranking among the top ten public universities in the world. We believe that our commitment to excellence, inclusion and close-knit learning communities will make a valuable contribution to the University of the Arctic. At the University of Toronto, we offer over 700 undergraduate and 200 graduate programs. Our diverse community of over 97,066 students and 25,253 staff is composed of individuals from all over the world. If accepted as members of the UArctic, we look forward to participating in the north2north mobility program and to supporting student exchange across Arctic States (USA, Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden). We will continue to support student exchanges within Canada, through longstanding programs in health, and as members of the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies.

Joining the University of the Arctic would provide exciting opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and knowledge sharing with like-minded institutions and communities. We are eager to explore the possibility of membership and look forward to furthering discussing our interest, and to presenting our complete application at UArctic Assembly in June 2023.

Thank you for considering our request to join the University of the Arctic as members.

Sincerely,

Meric S. Gertler
President

2023 UARCTIC MEMBERSHIP APPLICANT - PROFILE

Applicant: University of Toronto

Country: Canada

Membership Category: Arctic

Membership Type: HEI

Profile Description:

Founded in 1827, the University of Toronto is Canada's top university with a long history of challenging the impossible and transforming society through the ingenuity and resolve of its faculty, students, alumni and supporters.

With over 1.45 billion dollars in research funding, we are proud to be one of the world's top research-intensive universities, bringing together top minds from every conceivable background and discipline to collaborate on the world's most pressing challenges.

Our community is a catalyst for discovery, innovation and progress, creating knowledge and solutions that make a tangible difference around the globe. And we prepare our students for success through an outstanding global education rooted in excellence, inclusion and close-knit learning communities.

The ideas, innovations and contributions of more than 640,000 graduates advance U of T's impact on communities across the globe.

Together, we continue to defy gravity by taking on what might seem unattainable today and generating the ideas and talent needed to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future.

The University of Toronto is comprised of three campuses, St. George in downtown Toronto, and Scarborough and Mississauga campuses. The University of Toronto offers over 700 undergraduate and 200 graduate programs. The university consistently ranks in the top ten public universities in the world and as the top university in Canada.

Strategic/Thematic Focus Areas:

Researchers and academics across the University have made significant contributions to Arctic research in Canada and beyond, in diverse areas including health and technology; environmental science; architecture; and the arts.

With respect to Arctic research, we have approximately 25 researchers who do research with an Arctic focus, in addition to many co-investigators and graduate students.

Thematic areas include:

Climate and environmental sciences (Professors Rudy Boonstra; Laura Brown; Irena Creed; Sarah Finkelstein; Jochen Halfar; Yuhong He; Peter Kotanen; Paul Kushner; Igor Lehnherr; Bailey McMeans; Kent Moore; Trevor Porter; Kimberly Strong) with research programs in the departments of Physics, Geography, Chemical and Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences. This includes connections to the Canadian Sea Ice and Snow Evolution Network (CanSISE.ca), and founding members of CANDAC – the Canadian Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Change, which has established the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory (PEARL) at Eureka, Nunavut.

Health and health technology: (Professors Jeffrey Ansloos; Allison Crawford; Tracey Galloway; Carmen Logie; Jana MacLachlan; Alex Mihailidis) with research programs in the the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health, Faculty of Medicine, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, and Department of Anthropology. Areas of research include Indigenous knowledges, health and wellbeing; suicide prevention and life promotion; health technologies; nutrition science; sexual and reproductive health and rights; chronic disease; medical ethics; and health and public health policy.

Humanities and the Arts: This is an emerging area at the University of Toronto. Dr. Mark Cheetham, in the Department of Art History, leads a working group on Visual Cultures of the Circumpolar North at the Jackman Humanities Institute. The group brings together interdisciplinary perspectives on Indigenous, environmental, and settler pasts, presents and futures around the Circumpolar North to examine the complex visual/textual cultures of this region. Ms. Lisa Boivin, Dene artist and PhD candidate brings together bioethics and the land-based practices of Dene medicine through her paintings and writing. Dr. Allison Crawford brings medicine and the arts together through her work in the Faculty of Medicine and Department of English.

Architecture: At the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design Professor Mason White leads a research group that understands architecture as a mutable territory that is formed out of and responsive to its environment and history. Lateral Office, the design practice he founded, was awarded Special Mention from the international jury for the project “Arctic Adaptations,” at the 2014 Venice Biennale in Architecture. His SSHRC funded research has included studies on housing in Nunavut.