

III UArctic Rectors' Forum "Yugra Declaration", Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia 5 June 2009

Transition to a knowledge-based society is a powerful process for economic and social development. The ability to respond rapidly, and with a high level of competence, are critical factors for economic competitiveness and should be considered as drivers for reform in the education system. UArctic has the potential to respond to the demand for effective multi-channel cooperation between higher education institutions, industry, business, government, and the broader community in maintaining long-term strategic partnership.

The UArctic Strategic Plan 2008-2013 identifies three priority areas: Building Human Capacity in the Arctic, Adaptation to Climate Change, and the Arctic as an Energy Region. These broad focal areas include human health and natural resource management in the circumpolar north as areas for key engagement in teaching and research. Higher education institutions place a primary emphasis on excellence as the standard for their contribution to the public good in both education and research. Relevance is an increasingly important measure of the impact of our work - particularly in the context of the circumpolar north in the face of global change. The UArctic Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of both excellence and relevance.

UArctic is uniquely placed as a network to play a vital role in enabling changes that will increase the quality of life of northern peoples and facilitate socioeconomic development of the circumpolar north for the public good. UArctic recognizes that the culture and traditions of indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge are central to the sustainable stewardship and the cultural and socio-economic development of the circumpolar north. It is important that UArctic facilitates the integral activity of indigenous peoples and private sector partners in the north through engagement of its members. This inclusive approach supports capacity building concerning indigenous cultures and rights within the private sector. The UArctic network has the ability to play a key role in education and research collaboration through its Thematic Networks. UArctic cooperation will lead to the natural inclusion of the indigenous peoples in all private sector partnerships.

UArctic is a diverse network, spanning the full spectrum of postsecondary institutions of the North. Institutional relationships within UArctic offer a unique and complementary set of strengths for private sector partnership. Newer institutions in geographic and/or conceptual areas of rapid development will benefit greatly from partnership with more well-established institutions. These partnerships offer significant value-added mutual benefits that will be compelling for private sector engagement and critically important for the sustainable development of the circumpolar north – opening doors for innovative engagement with the private sector and regional governments at all levels.

The III UArctic Rectors' Forum highlights two key focus areas for the UArctic higher education members:

- Development of educational and research programs by partnership of member institutions
- Development of cooperation between universities, business, and government, focussing on research and innovation

Increased engagement will enable the values and strength of UArctic institutions to be harnessed in training and research, leading to increased human capacity in the circumpolar north. This is particularly relevant in the areas of natural resource and energy management and human health and well-being – including cultural stewardship and the inclusion of traditional knowledge.

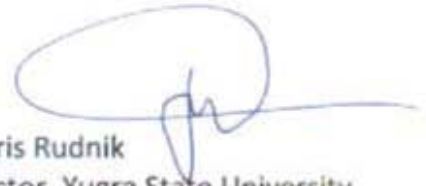
UArctic higher education members of the III UArctic Rectors' Forum agree to, and further encourage governments and the private sector, to develop cooperation in the North in the following areas:

1. Implementation of intergovernmental agreements to provide support to economic and social development of the North;
2. Further development of collaboration with private sector partners in the North with a view to invest in updated educational, research and innovation products;
3. Preservation and innovative development of economic activities of the indigenous peoples of the North, building on international standards on indigenous and human rights;
4. Elaboration of international cooperation strategies and mechanisms relevant to the needs of northern people for social and economic development of the North;
5. Developing joint international projects aimed at increasing quality of education and research and applying to international organizations and foundations;
6. Developing and implementing joint educational, joint/double degree programs as an important prospect of cooperation;
7. Developing courses for the private sector aimed at supporting knowledge about indigenous and local cultures and languages in addition to thorough information on human and indigenous rights;
8. Joint participation (universities, business, government) in trans-national projects aimed at sustainable development in the North;
9. Close cooperation with international business associations, indigenous peoples' organizations, chambers of commerce and industries of the Northern territories and the international Northern Forum.
10. Close cooperation with governments and inter-governmental agencies like UNESCO to ensure the inclusion of Arctic- relevant issues in global discussions on issues relevant to the future and well-being of northern people, and enhanced cooperation with universities of sub-Arctic regions of the world to address common problems.
11. Sharing capacity to gather information about the Arctic and finding scientific capacity to address problems of common concern.

12. Support Russia's initiative to start a Pan-Arctic Encyclopedia "The Arctic's Electronic Memory" and encourage cooperation between this initiative and other related Arctic database initiatives.
13. Encourage UArctic members to actively develop indigenous educational programs.
14. Close cooperation in adult education, support of lifelong learning through faculty member exchanges, and joint research for improvement of educational methods and programs.
15. Encourage governments to reduce barriers to private sector- university partnerships.



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