



**UArctic**  
Strategic Plan  
2008-2013

## Contents

UArctic: What we are?.....	3
UArctic values.....	3
Our Vision.....	4
UArctic Mission:.....	4
The UArctic Motto .....	4
Benefits of Circumpolar Cooperation—Roles of UArctic .....	5
Strategic Focus.....	5
Vision 2013.....	6
Areas of focus.....	8
UArctic Structure .....	8
Thematic Networks .....	8
Programs .....	9
Service to Members.....	10
Rectors' Forum .....	10
Charter .....	10
UArctic Partners .....	11
UArctic Legal Status .....	11
UArctic Funding .....	12
UArctic Identity.....	13

## UArctic: What we are?

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research<sup>1</sup> in the North. Our members share resources, facilities, and expertise to provide post-secondary education relevant and accessible to students and communities of the North.

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.

Our overall goal is to create a strong, sustainable circumpolar region by empowering northerners and indigenous peoples through education, training and shared knowledge. UArctic seeks to promote excellence in knowledge generation and knowledge application in areas relevant to the North.

UArctic education is circumpolar, holistic, and diverse in nature, and draws on our combined members' strengths to address the unique challenges of the region. UArctic promotes cooperation in a context in which recognized degrees are granted by the members themselves.

### UArctic values

#### **Circumpolar...**

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

#### **Holistic...**

- UArctic promotes understanding among different learning systems, bringing together perspectives from the arts and both social and natural sciences with traditional and indigenous knowledge to foster a focus on issues and needs. This approach is intended to yield greater and more relevant knowledge application than a classical disciplinary approach.

#### **Diverse...**

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

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<sup>1</sup> UArctic defines Higher Education broadly to include all post-secondary education and training. The term research includes knowledge generation and transfer and embraces all forms of knowledge, traditional and indigenous knowledge as well as common scientific knowledge.

## Our Vision

In the North, For the North, By the North—Towards a Sustainable World

### UArctic Mission:

Through UArctic, members together shall:

#### **Empower the North**

- Empower the residents of the Circumpolar North, by building human capital through training and higher education.

#### **Improve access to education**

- Reduce barriers to training and higher education in the North in order to provide increased opportunities for all northerners.

#### **Serve our community**

- Develop initiatives in partnership with our community and indigenous peoples, which are responsive to their needs and support their aspirations, educational needs and requirements.

#### **Create shared knowledge**

- Create shared knowledge, opportunities for knowledge application and sharing, and provide for quality discussion on contemporary issues related to the Circumpolar North.

#### **Build regional identity**

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

#### **Strengthen the voice of the Arctic**

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

## The UArctic Motto

**With Shared Voices**

## Benefits of Circumpolar Cooperation—Roles of UArctic

- UArctic is a network that serves the development goals of the Circumpolar North and helps northerners achieve their goals on their own terms.
- UArctic recognizes the diversity of institutions in its network and acknowledges that each brings different kinds of expertise and resources. UArctic thrives on building on these different areas of core competency and specialization and on complementing them with resources from other partners.
- UArctic recognizes that both world-class research and education can be done in the North, affirming that the north is an attractive environment for faculty and researchers.
- UArctic promotes the recognition of traditional knowledge as an integral part of northern research, training and education and stimulates further cooperation to foster the important role of traditional and indigenous knowledge in the northern knowledge base.
- UArctic fosters thematic, or issues based, cooperation to enable networking among UArctic members on specific areas of expertise.
- UArctic encourages and enables the development of the next generation of northern leaders, people who are born and educated in the region. UArctic also encourages the design of academic programs and services that are based on the needs of the region.
- UArctic fosters flexibility in delivery options that are sensitive to the needs of indigenous and other northern students in smaller centres and remote areas in the north, helping to balance the demands of work and community life.
- UArctic assists northerners in the demonstration of the importance of the Circumpolar North to major global processes and empowers northerners to have a voice in decisions that will affect them.
- UArctic encourages development of activities that foster discussions, international experiences, and understanding of Northern issues with global significance
- UArctic provides cost-effectiveness through shared training, education and thematic research cooperation.
- UArctic enables northerners and others to gain a positive understanding of the cultural, environmental, political and economic complexity of the region.

## Strategic Focus

The overall goal of this strategy is:

- Increased socio-economic benefit for the North and, by extension, global benefit.

This strategy ensures that:

- The UArctic network supports holistic approaches and builds a strong northern, quality focussed knowledge-based culture for training and education.

The overarching thematic framework for the 2008-2013 strategy will focus on the wider implications of, and needs related to the following inter-related focal areas:

- Building Human Capacity in the North: culturally relevant training and education for sustainable Northern communities
- Adaptation to Climate Change: challenges for human society as well as nature
- The North as an Energy region: economic, cultural, environmental, and technical opportunities, demands and impacts

This strategic plan looks to increase:

- UArctic programs and activities
- leadership of indigenous peoples in the operation and governance as well as programmatic activities of UArctic
- the involvement and leadership from smaller northern colleges and universities

The primary re-organizing principles of this strategy are:

- emphasis on a thematic approach that promotes circumpolar cooperation in training, education and knowledge generation and application
- increased emphasis on utilizing the various strengths of the diverse UArctic membership in Thematic Network areas to foster and develop the specific institutional roles and inter-linkages

## Vision 2013

### **By 2013...**

- UArctic will have increased relevant training, higher education, and knowledge generation and application in the North with clear socio-economic benefits – particularly to remote communities and indigenous peoples.
- UArctic's innovative programs will have a significant impact on increasing the level of education in the Circumpolar North, and generate highly qualified people in Northern communities by providing career bridging opportunities.
- UArctic, through its members, will have a global leading role on Building Human Capacity in the North, Adaptation to Climate Change in the North, and Energy in the North from technical, cultural and economic as well as environmental perspectives.
- UArctic's member institutions will be committed to the implementation of a common set of activities as outlined in the UArctic Charter

- UArctic will have enabled increased capacity in education, training, knowledge generation, and knowledge application for member institutions through its collaborative framework of UArctic members.
- UArctic will be recognized as the body that carries forward the Arctic IPY Training and Higher Education Legacy.
- UArctic will have, through partnering with other stakeholders in the Circumpolar North, ensured a stronger voice for the North globally

### **Specific goals for 2013...**

- Indigenous peoples and northerners will continue to have a well-defined prominent role in the leadership and development of UArctic.
- UArctic Thematic Networks will drive the agenda and work of UArctic in areas of priority.
- Well organized, thematically driven training opportunities, study and career paths, and research cooperation will be implemented and they will significantly increase the opportunities for training, particularly at higher education institutions located in the North.
- Member institutions will have access to networks of northern resident expertise and facilities, as well as clear paths for recruiting students into thematically focused research groups.
- Opportunities will be created to facilitate online and local access to UArctic curriculum for indigenous and other students in Northern communities.
- UArctic will recognize a range of certificate programs among its members that will be used as stepping stones towards laddered degree completion.
- UArctic members will share resources to cooperate on joint undergraduate and graduate programs, mobility, international marketing, and publications.
- Joint programs among UArctic member institutions will make them the study destinations of choice for students from around the globe seeking programs in and about the North.
- UArctic will continue to operate in close partnership with national and local governments, including indigenous peoples' governments and organisations, and the private sector.
- UArctic will be an independent legal entity with a well-organized mechanism that allows for sub-units for regions or individual member institutions, or both, to facilitate capacity building and related program funding.
- Sustained multi-year UArctic funding from all Arctic Council member states will be secured.

## Areas of focus

UArctic has established several programs for education, training and mobility of academic staff and students at member universities and colleges. These programs provide an excellent foundation for building excellence and capacity in training and scholarship in the Circumpolar North. To move forward in an effective development plan, UArctic will build on three strategic focus areas:

1. Building Human Capacity in the North: culturally relevant training and education for sustainable Northern communities
2. Adaptation to Climate Change: challenges for human society as well as nature.
3. The North as an Energy region: economic, cultural, environmental, and technical opportunities, demands and impacts.

These areas are inter-related and encompass major areas of activity for UArctic member institutions. They are also consistent with perceived international areas of governmental priority for the Circumpolar North, reflected in the agenda of the Arctic Council. The strategic focus areas are to be understood broadly. Existing Thematic Networks that may be perceived outside these foci are encouraged, whenever possible, to develop their specialization in relation to these broad areas.

## UArctic Structure

### Thematic Networks

Thematic Networks are an efficient mechanism for building partnerships among members. They provide an optimal structure for facilitating successful student and faculty mobility and collaboration and lead to increases in relevant training and capacity for knowledge generation and application across the North. These Thematic Networks also create a natural framework for development of UArctic training and education programs, as well as tools for knowledge generation and application.

In the strategic period 2008-2013;

- UArctic activities will be conducted within the framework of Thematic Networks.
- Progress in Thematic Networks will be reviewed with an emphasis on identifying actions that ensure standards of excellence and relevance in the Thematic Network framework.



- UArctic will focus on identifying resources that enable strong Network growth – including government, community and private-sector funding.
- The range of Thematic Networks will be reconsidered in relation to the overall focal points of Building Human Capacity in the Arctic, Adaptation to Climate Change, and the North as an Energy region, and new networks will be promoted when relevant.
- All Thematic Networks should consider relating their Network focus to this overarching strategic focus wherever appropriate. Wherever possible, existing networks will be encouraged to explore the potential fit of their specialty with this strategic focus.
- UArctic will place an emphasis on using the quality assurance mechanisms of its member institutions to enhance and guarantee the collective quality of each Thematic Network.

## Programs

UArctic programs have clearly proven to be an effective mechanism for carrying out UArctic's goals and will remain the foundation of UArctic's implementation.

Participating UArctic members have a responsibility to ensure high quality and relevant programming and to maintain a wise, ethical and appropriate use of the UArctic identity.

In the strategic period 2008-2013;

- UArctic Undergraduate Studies will further develop the regional delivery of the UArctic Circumpolar Studies Program and ensure that its elements are used as a means of advancing circumpolar knowledge in excellent, relevant and thematically specific education offerings.
- UArctic will develop and foster new and shared skills training throughout the North.
- UArctic Graduate Studies will foster and assist development of high-quality, joint and parallel graduate and postgraduate program activities, which in turn will provide UArctic members with opportunities to develop and support relevant thematic networks.
- UArctic Mobility will embrace all relevant initiatives that can benefit northern populations through enhancing student and faculty exchange. This will include investment in mobility to transmit northern knowledge and understanding to southern populations.
- UArctic Knowledge and Dialogue activities will focus on demonstrating competency of UArctic members in Northern research and knowledge generation, including traditional knowledge. Emphasis will be placed on enabling UArctic members to contribute actively to Arctic Council working groups and other relevant bodies.

- UArctic will facilitate alternative paths to degree completion among members. This will be achieved partly by promoting access to certificate programs as laddered steps toward credentialing and degree completion. Capacity building relationships among members will also extend curriculum availability through development of clusters of scholarship and teaching / knowledge generation.

## Service to Members

- UArctic will develop a set of common services that will help its members with improved marketing focused towards a diverse group of students, access to high quality academic publishing capacity and access to UArctic Secretariat coordinating support services.

## Rectors' Forum

The UArctic Rectors' Forum is a new element in the UArctic structure. It brings together university and college Presidents, Rectors, Provosts, Chancellors, and Vice-Presidents around specific themes. This institutional leadership forum is not an institutional representative forum; the Council of UArctic serves that function.

- During the 2008-2013 strategic period, UArctic will refine the Rectors' Forum as a venue for leaders of UArctic member institutions to engage in facilitation of northern development.

## Charter

The idea of a UArctic Charter arose at the Rectors' Forum as a mechanism for UArctic members to show increased commitment to sharing resources and to joint development and implementation of programming. The UArctic Charter will enable alignment of all signatory members under the same institutional objectives and responsibilities. The Charter focuses on broader objectives and responsibilities of signatories rather than specific operational details of UArctic and its governance bodies. The UArctic Charter concept was endorsed at the Rectors' Forum meeting in Rovaniemi February 2008.

- In the 2008-2013 strategic period, UArctic will ensure that the Charter becomes an efficient instrument for cooperation among UArctic member institutions.

## **UArctic Partners**

During the 2008-2013 strategic period, UArctic will focus on partnership with a range of organizations:

- Increased relevance to Arctic Council: Thematic focus of work will ensure direct relevance to Arctic Council agenda
- Arctic post secondary training, education, and research cooperation: UArctic will encourage the Arctic Governments to implement a permanent mechanism to facilitate cooperation in Northern knowledge generation, training and higher education.
- Arctic Science organisations: UArctic will work to further develop our compatible strengths and increase our interaction with the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the International Arctic Social Science Association (IASSA), as well as other relevant arctic science and research organisations.
- Arctic Parliamentarians: UArctic will encourage and facilitate its members' positive engagement in regional development through ongoing dialogue and partnership with the Arctic Parliamentarians – thereby helping to shape Northern socio-economic development.
- Regional partnerships: Northern regional governments and indigenous peoples' governments and organizations will be engaged in partnerships with UArctic as important stakeholders in the Arctic.
- The North in a global context: UArctic will focus on partnership and lobbying to ensure that the EU, Nordic Council, the UN, and other international bodies – including global private-sector entities – keep the North as a positive aspect of their operations. In particular, UArctic will ensure that the capacity, competence and relevance of its members are recognized by such organizations and companies.

## **UArctic Legal Status**

UArctic administrative and operational functions are decentralized.

The legal and economic affairs of UArctic programs and activities are handled through the good offices of individual members. This practice has been useful in building a decentralized UArctic with strong bonds between UArctic and individual members.

UArctic seeks a stable funding base for its administration through the combined resources of member contributions (in kind, program overheads and direct support) and external funding (public and private). To be able to receive funds specifically addressed to UArctic, it will be necessary to complement this practice by developing an independent legal entity for UArctic internationally. As several funding sources require national addresses for funds, this international UArctic Foundation will need to be supplemented

by a well-organized mechanism that allow for sub-units – for regions or specific member institutions, or both, to facilitate capacity building and related program funding.

In the 2008-2013 strategic period:

- UArctic will establish a legal status with a “foundation” mechanism that can receive and disburse funds as directed by UArctic Governance systems.
- UArctic will further develop solutions that allow UArctic to support legal entities in several Arctic States or at individual member institutions.
- Arrangements for independent legal status should strive to maintain the benefits of a distributed UArctic organization with UArctic operations and offices hosted by members.
- UArctic will be transferred from the current informal consortium structure to formal legal entity status within this strategic planning period.
- Within this model, member institutions will maintain their right and ability to raise and manage funds for UArctic operations.

## **UArctic Funding**

Currently, the majority of UArctic activities are carried out by our members and those members cover the majority of costs. External UArctic support is provided to UArctic member organizations by several member states of the Arctic Council. A small part of the funding is provided for the operation of the UArctic Secretariat while the larger portion is allocated to UArctic program activities, including mobility programs. Specific project funding has also been successfully sought for a variety of UArctic activities, normally under the leadership of one member or a consortium of members.

By enabling the provision of further, continued, multi-year UArctic funding from Arctic Council Member States, and working with member institutions to gain leverage from local governments and the private sector (industry, commerce, foundations and individuals), UArctic can maximize the ability of its university and northern college partnerships to embrace a multi-tier–post-secondary approach to embody skills training, scholarship and research, including an emphasis on opportunities for indigenous peoples of the North.

A discrete UArctic profile for international interaction should enable provision of secure multi-year batch funding and the possibility of building sustainability through development of a UArctic Foundation. Such an endowment would be built through a high-level approach to governments, industrial and commercial stakeholders and private donors. Members will gain specific benefits from this arrangement in cases where the donor believes individual members are too small or narrow as targets for support; the

UArctic network, through its Thematic Networks, can provide a broader field for engagement of funding bodies.

In the 2008-2013 strategic period:

- Member contributions will continue to be the base of operations
- Sustained multi-year government support will be needed to ensure both member and external support.
- Opportunities for growth – Thematic, project-oriented sources, in particular private-sector partnerships and philanthropic donations, will be the main area of growth.
- Endowment building – Development of UArctic as an independent legal entity will ensure operational freedom and the capacity to receive direct support.
- UArctic membership criteria will be revisited to ensure that peoples of the north and active members benefit from its operations and that those member contributions are valued.
- UArctic will prioritize raising and distributing funds to member organizations from larger single sources, while members will continue to develop regional and local sources for their UArctic activities.

## **UArctic Identity**

UArctic has developed into a well recognized circumpolar training and higher education network organization. The identity “UArctic” should be used to the best advantage for our members and peoples of the north. UArctic members have an important responsibility to ensure wise, ethical and relevant use of the UArctic identity in their areas of work.

In the 2008-2013 strategic period:

- The UArctic brand will be developed and safeguarded as a “hall-mark” of excellence for northern engagement of member institutions in a way that reflects the mission, values and socio-economic relevance of UArctic. This brand could be reflected in a high-impact statement such as: “UArctic is a recognized partner of indigenous peoples of the Arctic”.
- The UArctic brand will be used to enable development of funding and support towards UArctic activities.
- The UArctic brand will promote strong partnerships between UArctic and the Indigenous Peoples of the North.
- The UArctic brand will be developed as a quality stamp for courses and degrees developed within the UArctic network.

- UArctic will develop mechanisms that allow the brand to be used by members on institutes, centres and departments as a quality stamp and sign of international northern cooperation.