



Council of UArctic meets at UNBC

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The Council of the University of the Arctic (UARctic) has concluded its 17th meeting held May 20-21, 2014 at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Council representatives from over seventy member institutions engaged in lively discussions that will guide UArctic's operations through the implementation of its new Strategic Plan for the coming years.

The Council meeting is the annual general assembly of the UArctic network, bringing together representatives of universities, colleges, and other organizations that are committed to higher education and research in the North. During the meeting, the Council took key decisions about the University of the Arctic's future development, including welcoming of additional institutions and organizations as Council members, bringing UArctic's total membership to 172.

Lars Kullerud, President of UArctic, introduced UArctic's new management structure with new vice-president positions for Research, Education, Organization (replacing Administration), and Interregional Cooperation, joining the existing vice-presidents Indigenous and Finance. The Council endorsed the UArctic Strategic Implementation Plan for 2014-16, laying out the action plan for UArctic on Education, Research, Mobility, as well as the Organization.

Kari Laine from the University of Oulu, the Vice-President Research, is working with both the Thematic Networks and the Research Office based at NArFU. Laine notes that, "UARctic members represent the leading expertise on Arctic issues, and puts us in a position to work with other partners like the Arctic Council, IASC, and IASSA to ensure a northern voice in setting science priorities in the region."

Council approved an important change to the Bylaws, introducing a change to the membership categories. The 'Non-Arctic' members category replaces the category 'associate members', allowing Non-Arctic members to more fully participate in UArctic activities. Arctic members will have exclusive voting rights on certain areas that affect the strategic direction of the network.

The meeting also welcomed one new Thematic Networks to UArctic, Commercialization of Science and Technology for the North, led by Ken Coates of the University of Saskatchewan with University of Tromsø – the Arctic University of Norway, University of Oulu, University of Nordland, and Yukon College as initial members of the network.

Professor Gary Wilson of UNBC and Chair of the local organizing committee notes that "The presence of the Council of UArctic in Prince George at such a critical point in the network's development serves to underscore UNBC's long-term commitment to circumpolar cooperation in higher education and research. UNBC is a founding member of UArctic, and is excited by the organization's accomplishments and its current direction." Wilson also notes

the tremendous opportunity provided by organizing the Council meeting of UArctic back-to-back with the International Conference of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS VIII).

The next meeting of the Council of UArctic will take place at Buryat State University from June 13, 2015.

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, research institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North. UArctic builds and strengthens collective resources and collaborative infrastructure that enables member institutions to better serve their constituents and their regions. Through cooperation in education, research and outreach we enhance human capacity in the North, promote viable communities and sustainable economies, and forge global partnerships.

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