

May 30th, 2002

SAO/B/2002/3.4.

Arctic Council Secretariat
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Unit for Northern Dimension
P.O. Box 176, FIN-00161 Helsinki
FINLAND

Dear sir/madam:

On behalf of the University of the Arctic (UArctic), I am writing to request accreditation as an observer to the Arctic Council. This application is made in accordance with Article 40 and Annex 2 of the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure.

The University of the Arctic is an international non-governmental organization which develops and delivers academic programming for the circumpolar region through the cooperative work of its members. The development of UArctic has been made possible, in no small part, through the support of the Arctic Council and its member states and permanent participants organizations. We feel that formalizing our relationship with the Arctic Council will better allow both organizations to cooperate in their common goals of addressing the challenges to the Arctic region.

Pursuant to Annex 2, the following information on UArctic is provided:

- Statement of ability to contribute to Arctic Council's work.
- Statement of organization's purpose.
- *Launching the University of the Arctic: from Ideas to Action*, UArctic's report to the Senior Arctic Officials in Rovaniemi, June 13, 2001
- Description of activities
- Description on governance system
- Membership listing

We look forward to the acceptance of our application and continued cooperation with the Arctic Council.

Sincerely,

Lars Kullerud
Director

cc: UArctic Executive Committee
UArctic External Relations Committee

Application for Observer Status to the Arctic Council

19/04/2002

Ability to contribute to Arctic Council

The academic and scientific communities have been among the most active initiators and participants in circumpolar cooperation. Organizations such as the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), both Arctic Council observers, have already demonstrated the importance of linkages between science, education and decision-making processes in the circumpolar region. Indeed, the work of the scientific community has formed the basis of the Arctic Council's working groups.

The University of the Arctic has a clear role in bridging these communities and processes, and contributing positively to the Arctic Council's commitment to addressing challenges to the region, as for example expressed in the Sustainable Development work program. Knowledge and education are key to giving northerners the ability to deal with issues of sustainable development, the environment, and community viability. In addition to contributing to the development of human capacity in the region, the University of the Arctic also serves as an arena of communication between members of the scientific community, decision-makers, and stakeholders through venues like the Northern Research Forum.

The initial development of the University of the Arctic began with a request by the Senior Arctic Officials, at their meeting in October 1997, for the Circumpolar Universities Association to undertake a feasibility study. Since that time, the Arctic Council has played a key role in the work of developing the University of the Arctic. This shared history includes such landmarks as the Arctic Council's endorsement of the proposed University of the Arctic at its ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, in September 1998, and the official Launch of the University of the Arctic in Rovaniemi, in June 2001, held in conjunction with the 10-year celebrations of the Rovaniemi Process.

The University of the Arctic has been represented at every meeting of the Arctic Council at the Senior Arctic Officials and Ministerial levels. Reports to the Arctic Council have been used by the University of the Arctic as a regular means of describing the status of its work. In this sense, the University of the Arctic has already been considered an *ad hoc* Arctic Council Observer. It is only sensible for both organizations that that relationship now be formalized.

The following information is provided to support the University of the Arctic's application for Observer Status in the Arctic Council as a non-governmental organization, in accordance with article 40(c) and Annex 2 of the Arctic Council's Rules of Procedure.

Purpose

In the University of the Arctic's Governance document, Professor Oran Young describes the mission of the University of the Arctic as:

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is an international non-governmental organisation dedicated to higher education in and about the Circumpolar North. UArctic is a decentralized university without walls that mounts programs of higher education and research, builds local and regional educational capacity, and stimulates cooperation among participating institutions.

In carrying out its mission, the University of the Arctic is guided by the following principles:

- UArctic endeavours in all its activities to achieve the inclusiveness and respect for diversity embodied in the vision of “Shared Voices”;
- The composition of UArctic governing bodies reflects the cultural diversity of the circumpolar world;
- UArctic addresses issues relevant to northern peoples as they strive to realise the potential for cooperation in the circumpolar world and to meet the challenges of sustainability and globalization;
- Organisations and individuals participating in UArctic programmatic activities seek to generate and transmit knowledge about the interactions of biophysical and human systems in the Arctic and the role of the Arctic region in global systems.

The University of the Arctic works to address a key needs of the region by overcoming northerner’s existing barriers to higher education, and developing relevant academic programs designed *in the North, for the North, and by the North*.

The included document, *Launching the University of the Arctic: from Ideas to Action*, UArctic’s report to the Senior Arctic Officials in Rovaniemi, June 13, 2001, serves as our annual report.

Activities

The University of the Arctic conducts many cooperative activities between member institutions to develop and deliver international academic programs in the circumpolar region. UArctic has defined three ‘core programs’, which address the University’s goals in an integrated way. The Core Programs constitute UArctic’s “minimum core capacity” – as described in the Integrated Plan (*An Integrated Plan; for the Implementation of Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies, Arctic Learning Environment, and the Circumpolar Mobility Program 2000*, 8) – and include the Bachelor-level curriculum for Circumpolar Studies (BCS), the Arctic Learning Environment (ALE) and the Circumpolar Mobility Program (CMP). Together, these three programs form the foundation of the University of the Arctic’s academic content and means of delivery.

Other important programs include the Northern Research Forum, the Circumpolar PhD Networks, and the UArctic Field School.

Convening every second year, the Northern Research Forum (NRF) is an intensive dialogue that promotes policy-relevant discussion on the role of research in addressing northern issues. The forum encourages participation by younger people and people with new and unconventional approaches. Participants at each session include researchers, educators, politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, resource users and managers.

The Circumpolar PhD Networks in Arctic Social Sciences (CASS) and Arctic Environmental Studies (CAES) bring young researchers together to provide them with opportunities to discuss their work, learn more about researching northern issues, and build lasting connections for collaboration. Members of the CASS and CAES PhD Networks maintain contact through electronic networks and meet annually for research workshops featuring lectures and field excursions to areas of importance in the host university’s region. Networks like these are vital to building connections between young

researchers, furthering their understandings of northern regions and issues, and to stimulating relevant research on northern issues.

The UArctic Field School is designed to create stronger identifiable links between UArctic and its field course activities. Most of the field courses have existed independently before becoming affiliated with UArctic and maintain their previous client base. The grouping of courses offers greater potential for expanding participation and cooperation. The Field School also promotes further student mobility, one of the primary aims of UArctic. In terms of student recruitment, the title 'UArctic Field School' clearly identifies the kinds of courses available and how they are related to the University of the Arctic.

Governance

The following information establishes the University of the Arctic's status as an international non-governmental organization (NGO), based on its form of governance, purpose, membership, and activities. The University of the Arctic:

- Is independent of government.
- Has an international scope and purpose among the circumpolar academic and research community.
- Through its activities, contributes positively to international cooperation in education.
- Has open membership to institutions and organizations of higher learning within the circumpolar region.
- Does not make profits for itself or its members.
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Based on these characteristics, UArctic fits with definitions for *non-governmental organization* of both the UN Economic and Social Council and the Union of International Associations.

The governance system of the University of the Arctic consists of the Council (including its officers and its committees), the Board of Governors, and Circle of Elders. The administration of the University of the Arctic is conducted by the Director and the Circumpolar Coordination Office.

The representatives of the Members form the Council of the University of the Arctic (the Council). The Council develops, adopts, and oversees the academic programs of the University. It has the authority to initiate programmatic activities, set priorities among approved activities and make arrangements for the implementation of these activities, subject to review on the part of the other governing body, the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors (BoG) is the highest governing body of the University of the Arctic. The Board consists of a group of individuals, not exceeding eleven in number, who serve in their personal capacities and who act on behalf of UArctic.

UArctic administrative functions are handled on a decentralised basis and supported by voluntary contributions from the participating institutions. The chief executive officer is the Director who is responsible for the overall administration of the University. The Director is appointed by the Board of Governors and is accountable to the BoG for the administration of the University. Currently, the Director position is being filled with initial financing from the Finnish government and support from UNEP.

The Circumpolar Coordination Office (CCO) is responsible for the day-to-day activities of UArctic. Working closely with the Director on all matters pertaining to UArctic administration, the Head of the CCO is accountable to the Director.

Membership

University of the Arctic Members are participating universities, colleges, and other organizations concerned with higher education and research that have agreed to cooperate for the purposes of designing and implementing the programmatic activities of the University of the Arctic.

Currently the University of the Arctic has 34 members, representing a diversity of organization types and sizes, hailing from both the far north and the south. A current list of members is given below. An organization making a major contribution to the activities of UArctic is eligible to become a member in its own right.

The members are approved on the basis of the following criteria:

- willingness and ability of the applicant to participate in Council meetings and UArctic programmatic activities;
- demonstrated student interest in northern studies and research;
- demonstrated faculty involvement in northern studies;
- availability of existing curriculum and willingness to consider adjusting courses or devising new courses;
- an explicit mandate to deal with post-secondary education in or about the Arctic;
- willingness to provide in-kind support;
- willingness to provide services or material resources helpful to the operation of UArctic;

Current UArctic Members:

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| • ACUNS | • RAIPON |
| • Athabasca University | • Roskilde University |
| • Aurora College | • Rovaniemi Polytechnic |
| • Barents Virtual University | • Saami Education Center |
| • Center for Northern Studies | • Saami University College |
| • Council of Yukon First Nations | • Sakha State University of Russia |
| • Dartmouth College | • Scandinavian Seminar Group |
| • Helsinki University of Technology | • Stefansson Arctic Institute |
| • Hunter College CUNY | • Thule Institute |
| • Ilisagvik College | • Umeå University |
| • Ilisimatusarfik/ University of Greenland | • University of Alaska Fairbanks |
| • Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic | • University of Faroe Islands |
| • Kola Science Centre RAS | • University of Highlands & Islands |
| • Lakehead University | • University of Lapland |
| • Luleå University of Technology | • University of Northern B.C. |
| • Mid Sweden University | • University of Tromsø |
| • Oulu Polytechnic | • Yukon College |

Applications for membership have been received from the following institutions, and will be reviewed at the next Council meeting, in Yakutsk, Russia, in June 2002

- Bodø Regional University
- University of Laval

- University of Alberta
- Syktyvkar State University
- GRID/ARENDAL
- Tromsø University College
- Nunavut Arctic College

