



**A Time for Transition  
and  
Recommitment to  
Higher Education in the North**

**Findings and Recommendations  
of the 2022-2023 Independent External Evaluation  
of the University of the Arctic**

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## Executive Summary

The UArctic Board of Directors tasked a group of external experts to conduct an independent review of the organization. During late 2022 and early 2023, the External Evaluation Team (EET) reviewed documents and collected feedback from over 50 formal semi-structured interviews and informal conversations from people working in various roles within the UArctic structure and from people with a deep knowledge of the Arctic and with experience of working with UArctic. The EET held weekly or bi-weekly online working meetings in addition to the interviews. In this document the team lays out the fundamental challenges they see facing UArctic as it enters its third decade and makes recommendations addressing these topics. The ambition has been to focus on aspects that the team believes are important for the continuation of the successful development of UArctic.

The EET is convinced of the need and of the importance of UArctic as a singular institution within the ecosystem of arctic science organizations. Since its inception in 1997, UArctic has developed into an impressive force by providing a strong, holistic voice on arctic issues based on its building of a diverse and growing network of universities and institutions and fostering their interactions and collaborations. In doing so it has evolved over the past two decades to be a trusted and valued partner throughout the arctic region and globally. But successful development and growth in any organization brings with it challenges and opportunities, and the need for periodic reflection. This is particularly the case when the external environment is also changing, as is the case with the Arctic.

A major part of UArctic's remarkable development can be ascribed to its visionary and inspiring leadership. The top management's entrepreneurial mission-driven approach and highly successful relationship building has reaped impressive achievements for UArctic. The EET believes that the current leadership has grown UArctic significantly and brought it successfully to the threshold of its next natural phase of maturation, which includes the further institutionalization of its entrepreneurial and relationship-based approach. Such a phase includes a comprehensive and detailed leadership succession plan as well as plans for knowledge transfer. Without losing its dynamism and flexibility, UArctic needs to formalize the many connections, processes, and networks that frequently reside as tacit rather than explicit knowledge within its leadership.

While acknowledging the tremendous success of the UArctic and its leadership, having dedicated time and effort to grasp the organization of UArctic, both past and present, the EET believes that in looking to the future, to sustain its success what has evolved into a complex organizational design and structure needs consolidation and simplification in this next phase of its evolution. This includes a clear and understandable (externally as well as internally) leadership structure, transparent decision-making, coherent portfolios, and coordinated and integrated management systems. The EET sees its recommendation on succession planning and simplified organizational structure as natural next steps to guarantee the continued successful development of UArctic.

A successful fundraising program is an obvious means to secure an increase in resources to implement activities that can lead to important impacts for the Arctic. The EET has examined present fundraising plans and found them thorough, forward-thinking, and well defined. Yet fundraising efforts have had meager results to date. It is of utmost importance to establish an adequately staffed "Fundraising Office". It is crucial for success to develop clear, concrete, and inspiring offers for potential donors, including decisions on whether to pursue 'rolling' fundraising,

implement a campaign, or a combination of both. This includes a well-defined approach to donor cultivation and stewardship, including how senior management is deployed in such endeavor. UArctic should involve its members in the formulation of funding priorities, within the ambit of addressing 'big challenges,' as laid out in IPCC reports and similar high-level publications.

Since its inception, UArctic has had the goal to translate its vision of *"A strong, engaged, informed and dynamic North, creating better lives and environments for all northerners"* into action. UArctic is to be commended for this longstanding commitment to advancing activities that benefit Northerners. The EET did hear concerns about the clarity of roles and relationships among the various responsible persons and bodies created in UArctic's organizational structure to guarantee the representation of Indigenous interests; as well as concerns voiced about resourcing these efforts adequately.

The EET is impressed by the breadth and depth of the Thematic Networks and by their professional management. With now around 60 Networks, it may be time to evaluate the benefits of consolidating some of the networks with similar topics and/or that are narrower in scope, especially given the levels of support currently available. Opportunities for cross-network interaction and fertilization also were noted as desirable.

At its inception the UArctic's founding documents saw the fledgling organization as a vehicle for making a unique contribution to the facilitation and provision of higher education opportunities in, for and about the High North that no single institution could do on their own. Over time it has been perceived that UArctic's focus has shifted toward research - which now seems to have eclipsed UArctic's educational activities. This "mission drift" or perhaps "mission evolution" has resulted in a perceived decrease in attention to activity specifically geared toward small institutions and undergraduate education. The EET recommends that UArctic restore its focus on undergraduate educational opportunities and solicit input from northern communities and potential northern students about what is most needed in terms of opportunities and delivery methods.

The establishment of UArctic Chairs provides an opportunity for faculty and member institutions to increase the profile of their Arctic research. Considering that collaboration is a key attribute of UArctic, the EET recommends providing the cohort of UArctic Chairs with adequate opportunities to come together to develop new ventures, to more fully utilize their talent, creativity and deep knowledge of UArctic.

UArctic's membership has grown over the years and has potential for further growth. Growth in membership should not dilute its original commitment to small northern institutions, northern communities and northern Indigenous peoples. While building diversity in its membership, UArctic must ensure that new members agree to UArctic's vision, mission, and values.

**To conclude, the EET has approached the task of reviewing the UArctic as critical and supportive friends who endorse and laud the UArctic's success and its leadership for guiding it to this point, and simultaneously see an opportunity to further refine and build on its success as it plays an increasingly important role in a changing Arctic environment. To summarize the key messages derived from the review by the EET, they are: Simplify, clarify, consolidate, and reaffirm the commitment to Northern education opportunities.**

## Introduction

The impacts of climate change are upon us. The Arctic is warming at three to four times the global average and changes in the Arctic have far reaching local and global impacts. While the Arctic has just a fraction of a percent of the world's population, it is home to many Indigenous peoples. It contributes nearly 20% of many globally important resources such as minerals, energy, fish, and freshwater. Climate change is contributing to global sea level rise, changing weather patterns which lead to extreme events, changes in the distribution of flora and fauna, including invasive species, shifting, and intensifying human migration patterns, and other changes, creating multifold challenges for both the Arctic residents, Indigenous people and global society. The Arctic is a vital region for the world. The University of the Arctic (UArctic) plays a key role in helping to address challenges and create opportunities, by enhancing human capacity in the North and forging international partnerships to address the impacts of climate change and to promote viable Northern communities and sustainable economies.

As a network, UArctic aims to address local and global challenges by providing meaningful educational, research, and innovation opportunities through fostering collaborations among member institutions. It reduces barriers to academic cooperation across borders, cultures, and academic systems. In doing so over the past two decades it has evolved to be a trusted and valued partner throughout the Arctic region and globally.

The UArctic Board of Directors tasked a group of external experts to conduct an independent evaluation of the organization. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the External Evaluation Team (EET). During 2022 and 2023, the EET reviewed UArctic documents relating to strategy, implementation and work plans, organizational procedures, finances, fundraising efforts and activities. The EET also collected feedback from people working in various roles within the UArctic structure, including board members, Vice-Presidents, staff, representatives from member institutions, Thematic Network leads and participants, UArctic Chairs, former students, and representatives from partner organizations. It also sought input from several Indigenous Arctic persons with knowledge of UArctic. Highlighted in bold are the recommendations of higher priority.



## UArctic's Important Fundraising Efforts

Over the past few years, UArctic has taken important and forward-thinking steps to establish UArctic RY as a non-profit based in Finland, update bylaws, develop clearer funding and financial procedures and define funding opportunities. In addition to this, UArctic has established a philanthropy team composed of administration and board members that are working with a professional non-profit fundraising firm to develop extensive plans to increase external funds through philanthropy. Increased funds will allow UArctic to further enhance its activities in support of its vision and mission.



As part of its wider review of UArctic, and with a request from the Chair of UArctic's governing Board to give special consideration to fundraising, the EET examined these plans and found them thorough, forward-thinking, and well defined. In particular, the *Development Operating Plan (2018)* produced by UArctic staff with guidance from GG+A<sup>1</sup> is a comprehensive approach to implementing a philanthropy strategy.

Since the Plan was produced, progress has been made. The associated work plan, updated on 11 November 2022, points to the increase in commitment to philanthropy at all levels of the UArctic. Other achievements include the hiring of a Philanthropy Manager and dedicated Communications Coordinator focused on fundraising, the development of a strong case for support, some progress with major gift prospects, the launch of a Founder's Fund, and the establishment of the Tyr Committee of the Board and the President's Cabinet.

While clear plans exist, the EET regards the delay in appointing an experienced Executive Director of Development to be the single most significant impediment to making faster progress in fundraising. At the time of writing this report, the hiring process was underway and once in place, the Director of Development should be able to make progress on the plan if well supported. Successful philanthropy requires a comprehensive and integrated strategy that incorporates all stages of the philanthropic journey from cultivation to stewardship, and from annual giving to major gifts. Philanthropy as a field is now a professional and sophisticated global industry, with well-developed and tested strategies and practices.

Within the UArctic/GG+A action plan, numerous components explicitly rely on the appointment of a Director. Indeed, the original action plan states astutely: "UArctic's ability to achieve a sustainable fundraising program will require a full-time Director of Development (DOD) who will bring professional fundraising experience to the organization".<sup>2</sup> A Philanthropy Manager and dedicated Communications Coordinator, while important, are not a substitute for an experienced Director, so the team was pleased to see progress in hiring the Director.

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<sup>1</sup> Grenzebach Glier and Associates: Consultants in Philanthropic Management

<sup>2</sup> *Development Operating Plan*, 2018, p. 5

A comprehensive and integrated fundraising strategy will address key decisions about the balance between annual giving and major campaigns, articulating a menu of priorities, approaches to cultivation and stewardship of donors, communications, fundraising events and the management of alumni, volunteers, and supporters, the deployment of senior management members to 'top-and tail' fundraising efforts and so on. While annual giving can be an important source of unrestricted funds, for example, in many professional fundraising operations it is a small number of major donors who will provide the most significant gifts. Typically, the cultivation of a major donor can take 18 months of structured communications and interactions. Events, for instance, can be a useful way of identifying supporters capable of giving, as can the strategic deployment of 'leadership briefings' on major campaign priorities.

While GG+A in an update notes progress on developing a culture of philanthropy in UArctic, this culture can be further enhanced. Interviewees in key positions within UArctic noted that they had not been involved in discussions about philanthropy or were unaware of what was happening or how they might be able to contribute. This is not fully surprising given the complexity of UArctic and the challenge of keeping up on all developments throughout the organization.

The entrepreneurial nature of UArctic and its complex structure may contribute to confusion among potential donors on what UArctic is and does, and how it operates. In completing this review, the EET devoted attention to issues that might facilitate fundraising. For a fundraising campaign to be fully effective, the organization needs to be able to demonstrate its professionalism and ability to use effectively the gifts provided by donors, to have a clearly articulated and understood message, mission and vision, and to have a set of priorities that resonate with the interests of a variety of potential supporters. An overarching strategic message that clearly ties these aspects together and is well understood by a potential donors is key, as is the commitment and strong endorsement from UArctic members. There are some areas of giving that are more attractive than others, such as environmental conservation, education, and health to give a small number of examples. Overarching initiatives could be based on the UN Agenda 2030 and associated Sustainable Development Goals, the recent IPCC reports, or other global initiatives.

The team has been informed that such plans are currently being developed and the team hopes that UArctic administration is consulting with the many experts in its network in their formulation. At the time of writing this report, the team has not seen a fundraising package with an overarching message and vision. There is information to this effect for general solicitation of funds on the UArctic website which is a good start to this process. However, such a comprehensive strategy led by a professional director is, in the view of the EET, critical for establishing fundraising credibility and for making faster progress.

The discussions and review of documents revealed that UArctic is undertaking the creation of new projects as foci for fundraising. While this can be beneficial, current activities within the network that might be ready for philanthropic contributions also deserve attention. It is also clear that the addition of philanthropy activities has caused a strain on the current staff who

provide the day-to-day work of keeping the organization's main activities functioning efficiently.

To increase fundraising capacity, UArctic should develop a "Fundraising Office" that includes a Director of Development, program manager, researcher, and communications position as is currently being discussed, as well as the possibility for additional staff to fill various gaps as fundraising takes off. This would also allow an experienced Director to develop plans within a comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and longer-term philanthropy strategy as outlined by UArctic/GG+A both in their 2018 report and 2022 update on progress and further actions. Such an office would need to be resourced properly and have dedicated support staff. It should be funded through UArctic's 'core' budget to allow 100 percent of donated funds to flow to priorities, but clear KPIs and goals for fundraising should be set, and CASE Global Reporting Standards should be implemented.

Along with targeted fund-raising for specific projects and programs, UArctic may want to also consider a major giving campaign to establish fundraising priorities and goals, and build its core capacities and central coordination, and provide a benchmark for future growth. Capacity in the support staff and functions needs to keep up with the growth of the organization. While it may currently be strategic to depend on funding from member institutions or government entities to fund senior positions, in the future UArctic may want to reassess this practice due to potential drawbacks, including limiting the pool of qualified applicants, complicating management and reporting issues, and even leading to competing or conflicting responsibilities.

### Recommendations on Fundraising

- **On appointment of a Director**, develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy that draws on the recommendations outlined in the UArctic/GG+A action plan and addresses key questions contained therein. This is a robust document but has not been implemented in full due to the lack of a professional Director.
- **Implement a comprehensive and integrated strategy.** The action plan by UArctic/GG+A provides such a strategy and operational plan. This can be adapted to fit the specific circumstances of the UArctic, but successful philanthropy requires such a strategy.
- **Refine fundraising priorities based on the strategy.** Specifically involve members in the formulation of funding priorities and campaigns as part of further enhancing a 'culture of philanthropy.'
- When hiring process is complete, **provide the Executive Director of Development with the necessary administrative, strategic, and financial support** to succeed in their job.
- **Create a transparent and well-understood internal process for accounting for and allocating the funds** raised and with a clear communication strategy to keep the full UArctic community informed. CASE Global Reporting Standards is a useful guide.

## Indigenous Perspectives and Northern Community Engagement

Since its inception, UArctic has had the goal to translate its vision of “*A strong, engaged, informed and dynamic North, creating better lives and environments for all northerners*”<sup>3</sup> into action. It seeks to ensure that “*UArctic programs are based on northern needs and member priorities*”<sup>4</sup> and has underscored the importance for Northerners themselves to have the capacity to determine their own futures. This includes providing mechanisms for the voices of Indigenous people and northern residents to be heard within the organizational structure. UArctic introduced the position of VP Indigenous to help meet its vision and goals in this area and established an Indigenous Issues Committee (now Avatitsinni). More recently, it endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at its 2022 Assembly. The organization is to be commended for this longstanding commitment to advancing activities that benefit Northerners and its sustained, concrete efforts to improve the processes involved in doing so. The EET heard frequent praise for UArctic’s continued dedication to ensuring Indigenous voices are heard, involved, and incorporated into its activities. Numerous individuals involved in UArctic also attributed their knowledge about and sensitivity toward Indigenous issues directly to their involvement in UArctic and the attention UArctic pays to, and demands for, regarding the importance of Indigenous issues.

At the same time, concerns were voiced about the clarity of roles and relationships between the various responsible positions and bodies created in UArctic’s organizational structure to guarantee the representation of Indigenous voices, and concerns about resourcing these efforts adequately. UArctic must continually reassess its progress toward further indigenizing its activities and processes. It must continue to challenge itself to find ways to move beyond “Western” models of organization and activities, to decolonize and indigenize these.

The EET repeatedly encountered concerns, including from Indigenous Northerners, that UArctic’s focus on its original mission of serving the North through the provision of improved access to higher education has been diluted by its increasing focus on research. UArctic’s initial focus on enhancing post-secondary opportunities for Northerners made it unique among the constellation of Arctic-focused organizations arising at approximately the same time. With the newly created VP for Northern Community Engagement comes a heightened expectation that UArctic will recommit through concrete actions to its values of ‘*For the North, By the North*’. The EET observed that many key players consider a recommitment to improving post-secondary educational opportunities for Northerners as vital to UArctic having a clear positive impact on their lives. Please see the recommendations in the next section (‘Recommendations for Education and Training’) regarding this matter.

### Recommendations on Indigenous Perspectives and Northern Community Engagement

- **Concretely identify how UArctic activities have affected people of the North, and how UArctic might most effectively positively contribute going forward.** Such analysis

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<sup>3</sup> UArctic’s Strategic Plan 2030, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> UArctic Strategic Plan 2020, p.11.



should include listening sessions with Northerners, including strong representation of Indigenous Northerners, to help UArctic prioritize resources.

- Consider what new efforts and approaches are optimal to support critical educational needs and research opportunities for northern residents, including Indigenous Northerners.
- **Clarify the roles of the Vice President-Indigenous and Avatitsinni** (Indigenous Advisory Committee), and their relationship to each other; **better incorporate both into UArctic's governance structure.**
- Ensure that both the **VP-Indigenous and Avatitsinni are sufficiently resourced** with administrative assistance and funding to perform their duties.
- With high expectations for the impact of the VP Northern Community Engagement, ensure this position has adequate administrative and travel support for the circumpolar activities.
- Enhance the impact of UArctic's activities in Northern communities by increasing community-based initiatives and community involvement in activities.

## Teaching, Learning, and Research

As noted above, UArctic was originally established to help create educational opportunities for small communities and institutions in the North, especially at the undergraduate level, in order to build needed capacity in the North. Over time the organization's focus has shifted toward research and related graduate education - which now seems to have eclipsed UArctic's undergraduate teaching activities. This perceived "mission drift", even if beneficial to connecting faculty from small and large institutions to engage in critical collaborative research as well as to provide significant opportunities to masters and PhD students, has resulted in a decrease in attention to activities specifically geared toward small institutions and undergraduate education. Members from such smaller institutions and communities, including Indigenous persons, lamented this shift, as few opportunities for post-secondary education still exist for many northerners. Leaving their smaller northern communities to pursue a post-secondary education is impossible for some northerners, while others who do so often don't return to the North.

In addition, UArctic's focus on research to some degree replicates efforts of other arctic research organizations, while relinquishing the distinct contribution pioneered by UArctic that most directly addressed capacity building in the North. Many with whom the EET spoke noted the need for a refocus on the teaching and learning aspects of higher education, to reclaim UArctic's unique and crucial role in improving life for northerners. And while the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies (BCS) was initially designed as a resource for students in the North, especially in remote places, as UArctic's non-Arctic members grow, a reinvigoration of the BCS could play an important role in teaching non-northerners about the North, informed by UArctic's values.

The mobility and exchange programs continue to be one of the activities that clearly offers benefits to northern undergraduate students, including those at small institutions. The north2north mobility webpage reports back from many students who participated in these exchanges and on how it has changed their perspectives and enhanced their lives, both professionally and personally. The opportunities available for these exchanges depend on government funding and thus are limited in scope by funding sources. While the number of Indigenous students that apply for these programs is limited, Indigenous leaders underscore the great value such exchanges have for capacity building. Yet, while the advantages of in-person exchanges abound, capacity building can also be developed through internationalization-at-home opportunities that connect communities both within the North and between North and South. Virtual exchange programs can help overcome financial and other barriers that prevent people from traveling physically, and in doing so can promote cross-cultural learning.<sup>5</sup>

Thematic Networks (TNs) have facilitated the collaboration opportunities for faculty members at UArctic institutions. Characterized as *'incubators'* for project development and *'the stable backbone'* for collaboration,<sup>6</sup> they also have been UArctic's most notable achievement over the past decade. Although many of the TN leads and participants with whom we spoke asserted that such collaborations would have occurred regardless of the aegis provided by UArctic, they also praised the support and validation offered by UArctic, which has facilitated their collaborative work. The excellent support provided by the VP Network's office was frequently commended. The TNs vary in size and level of activity.

With now around 60 Networks, it may be time to evaluate the benefits of consolidating some of the networks with similar topics and/or that are narrower in scope, especially given the current levels of support available. Opportunities for cross-network interaction and fertilization were also noted as desirable. While TNs have provided important and meaningful educational opportunities for masters and PhD level students, and in doing so, have helped institutions with smaller graduate programs, the TNs seem unconnected to undergraduate teaching; some linkage here should be fostered. TNs have played a role in making connections among communities, students and representatives of industries, a role that could be further encouraged.

The establishment of UArctic Chairs provides an opportunity for faculty as well as member institutions to increase the profile of their Arctic research. Given collaboration is a key attribute of UArctic, it is important to make sure the cohort of UArctic Chairs has adequate opportunities and funding to come together to develop new ventures: the Chairs with whom the EET spoke indicated enthusiasm for such opportunities. Caution should also be taken to make sure the number of Chairs does not grow to a point of dilution of the status of these positions.

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<sup>5</sup> As recognized in the *Final (2021) UArctic Implementation Plan and Work Plans*, p.25.

<sup>6</sup> *Final (2021) UArctic Implementation Plan and Work Plans*, p.12.

### Recommendations for Education and Training

- **Increase UArctic's focus on post-secondary / undergraduate educational opportunities.**
- **Solicit input from northern communities** and potential northern students about what is most needed in terms of educational opportunities and delivery method.
- Charge the VP Academic to **implement new ways to engage UArctic students**, drawing on the help of experts from member institutions to use new pedagogical practices, both on-line and in-person.

### Recommendations for Mobility/Exchanges

- Provide mobility exchanges that are more tailored to Northern Indigenous student needs, including exchanges with Indigenous institutions beyond the North.
- Enhance online / virtual opportunities for mobility experiences.
- Pursue additional funding mechanisms to open exchange experiences to all in the Arctic.

### Recommendations for Thematic Networks (TNs)

- Improve communication and collaboration among/across TNs, including providing funding opportunities that require the participation of more than one Network.
- Reinforce the importance of including Northern residents in TNs and their activities as this can help with creating local research capacity.
- Incentivize TNs to create teaching modules for undergraduate delivery, including high-quality online teaching and learning opportunities.
- **Utilize the creativity and knowledge of TNs** to help identify and develop inspiring foci for fundraising.
- Increase administrative and resources support for TN activities.
- When TNs cease, retain an archive of their activities online for historical purposes.

### Recommendations for UArctic Chairs

- **Ensure / actively create opportunities for UArctic Chairs to interact**, with the desired outcome to be the establishment of fertile and more holistic research collaborations among them on topics crucial to the well-being of the Arctic and its residents.
- **Utilize the creativity and knowledge of UArctic Chairs** to help identify and develop inspiring foci for fundraising.
- Ensure Chair positions are available for representatives of Northern Indigenous groups and at smaller northern institutions; prioritize following through on the plan to create one or more Indigenous Chairs.
- Provide adequate central support mechanisms to assist the Chairs in identifying, planning and coordinating their collaborative activities.

## Members and Partners

The Arctic region's education landscape is both rich and complex as it is to bring together very different education and higher education systems with different national, regional, state and territory rules and regulations. Higher education institutions are diverse in size, mission and vision, and benefit from various levels of dependence/independence from government regulations. All types of institutions are important in the UArctic network as each fulfills specific roles in capacity-building in the North. The role of UArctic is to bring these institutions together for reflection and action on issues and opportunities of importance to all in the region and its inhabitants. UArctic attracts universities from beyond the Arctic for a variety of reasons, including for enhancing their research profile and geopolitical ambitions. It also attracts many other stakeholders interested in the Arctic. UArctic's membership has grown steadily over the years and still has much potential for growth. It should continue to strongly advocate for and build this diversity in its membership, but it is important that new members also agree to support and uphold UArctic's values and mission, including in their actions.

Indigenous organizations play a key role as UArctic members. They build bridges among the different member categories and actors involved in the work of UArctic and offer the means for UArctic meeting its goal of better understanding and respecting the "*cultures, languages, traditional knowledge, and world views*"<sup>7</sup> of Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. UArctic has successfully recruited several Indigenous institutions and organizations as members; however, due to limited resources it is often difficult for these members to fully engage in UArctic activities. Special attention should be paid to keeping current Indigenous members, increasing this essential membership group, and utilizing their insights on how best to serve Indigenous northerners.

Many faculty members and students at member institutions know little about UArctic and the additional opportunities it provides to its members. UArctic should actively encourage and perhaps incentivize members to enhance UArctic's visibility within their institution, to help expand the diversity and expertise of UArctic.

UArctic has established partnerships with a range of other organizations, mostly but not exclusively focused on the Arctic, and including scientific, business, Indigenous, and quasi-governmental organizations as well as major arctic conferences. These partnerships have been developed strategically to give UArctic a voice in important decision fora, such as Arctic Council Working Groups and arctic science planning initiatives. They enable UArctic to advocate on behalf of its members. UArctic further plans to expand partnerships with media. As interest in the Arctic continues to grow, so will partnership opportunities for UArctic. It is important that new partners share UArctic's core vision and mission.

Concern over duplication of efforts among the increasing number of arctic-focused organizations and conferences suggests a potential new role for UArctic: to initiate and host a

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<sup>7</sup> *Strategic Plan 2030* (glossy brochure), p.14.

forum for leaders of these organizations to share priorities, develop common plans, reduce duplication and enhance impact. While UArctic jointly hosts conferences, meetings and other events with partners, there is opportunity to bring a new set of arctic actors into contact with UArctic, increase its visibility, encouraging scholars to prioritize more co-hosted events among the plethora of arctic-focused meetings. This helps to reduce the conflicts for researchers and academics in deciding which meetings to go to and potentially reduces carbon footprint.<sup>8</sup>

The Frederick Paulsen Arctic Academic Action Award, a partnership between UArctic and Arctic Circle, serves as an important new investment in initiatives that address climate change in the Arctic. As this is a new award that has the potential to make large impacts, more could be done to promote its existence, the nominees and recipients. This could include plenary level speaking engagements at non-Arctic conferences for example. While a simple plan for communications does exist, it could benefit from comparative research with other international prizes and their communications efforts and reach.

### Recommendations for Membership

- **Pay special attention to supporting Indigenous organizations and small Northern institutions** as UArctic members, and to prioritizing their interests and needs in teaching, learning, research, and knowledge sharing, supporting participation in UArctic events.
- As interest in, and the reputation of, UArctic increases **ensure that growth in membership does not dilute the original mission to support small northern institutions and northern populations.**
- As membership changes, ensure the development of strategic management structures of the membership and proper staffing to handle additional administrative load.

### Recommendations for external partnerships

- Clarify the criteria used to choose with whom to pursue new partnerships; explicitly connect these criteria to the recruitment of new partners and the development of UArctic projects. Ensure that the vision and mission of UArctic are supported by new partners and underpin new projects.
- External partnerships should be announced and communicated about strategically in newsletters and other communications to help promote the partnership and encourage members to interact with these partners.

## Governance

Under the care of extremely competent, committed, and talented leadership, UArctic has evolved to be a solid, well-respected, and important international organization. The prodigious

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<sup>8</sup> *Strategic Plan 2030* (glossy brochure), p.9.

efforts of these people, particularly the President and the Secretary General<sup>9</sup> who have served in those roles since UArctic's inception is commended. Their entrepreneurial mission-driven approach and successful relationship building has achieved much for the network and the Arctic.

UArctic has grown considerably in recent years. With growth of the network has come complexity. To some extent the governance and structure of the UArctic has evolved to accommodate the complexity of the network and resembles something between a distributed network structure and a more traditional university structure. There is, however, a question about whether the entrepreneurial, opportunity-driven approach to growth is aligned with a governance structure fit for a much larger, more mature organization that UArctic has evolved into.

**This tension between strategy and structure manifests itself in three ways.** The **first** is that the very successful **entrepreneurial approach to growth** has been driven largely by relationship-based, if visionary, leadership. The degree to which the network of relationships supporting UArctic and its activities has been institutionalized within wider processes, systems and structures of UArctic is debatable. If, for example, there was to be a sudden change of leadership for any reason, would the tacit knowledge and relationships underpinning UArctic and its activities be easily accessible or transferable to new leadership?

A practical consequence of an expanding UArctic mission, as discussed above, is that functional purposes including leadership, coordination, implementation, and administration have also increased in complexity at the expense of coherence. Management and organization clearly sit somewhere between a distributed and centralized model. This is not an uncommon challenge for successful organizations that have grown quickly and presents an opportunity to think about the relationship between strategy and structure, and its sustainability in a changing landscape. As a rule of thumb, structure should follow strategy.

The **second** way that the tension between strategy and structure manifests itself in UArctic is in a **governance structure and organizational design** that has become manifestly more complicated and difficult to understand for both members of the network and the UArctic External Evaluation Team. UArctic has grown organically into an organization with multiple Vice Presidents, several committees, and many new processes. These are often quickly created to respond to urgent or important needs or directions given by the Board of Directors or members. Quick and agile responses, while useful to address immediate challenges, can lead to processes that are not well-connected to the overarching and current structures. For UArctic, such organic growth has led to a complex and confusing structure with overlaps and gaps. The growth has also led to what are likely unsustainable demands on the current staff; more support for the VPs and other senior positions is needed. Confusion may be compounded by changes in titles and roles of VPs over time.

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<sup>9</sup> Formerly the VP Organization / Head of International Secretariat

Understanding where different activities sit, how they relate to each other and who is managing them is challenging. The plethora of VP positions, while helpful to oversee various functions, are also quite confusing, as portfolios of these positions seem to change depending on the person in the role and the institutions hosting the VP position. There are also several committees that have changed names and functions and current mandates and leadership functions are not entirely clear and perhaps not communicated effectively to the internal UArctic network and/or external partners. Unsurprisingly, most people with whom the EET engaged reported that when they needed something more often than not, they turned to the UArctic top management rather than to the leads of specific portfolios. This once again reflects an entrepreneurial organization reliant on personal relationships and vision. With growth and maturation, UArctic now needs to develop a coherent, integrated, and effective configuration of process, systems, and structures.

Key individuals reflected on the desirability of the Board to receive input from and interact directly with different levels and parts of the organization. If this is not already in place the EET suggests that the Board consider inviting key persons (e.g., VPs, Chairs, TN leaders) to give short presentations on ideas and aspects to support the continued successful UArctic development.

In the course of its discussions, the EET sensed some vexation about a lack of public recognition and appreciation for the efforts of staff and volunteers. This can be discouraging — and is also very easy to address. We encourage UArctic to develop a culture of publicly recognizing the important efforts of staff and volunteers — e.g., through inclusion in events in which they play a major role, through recognition in UArctic’s publications, etc. This will enhance morale and encourage new volunteers to engage.

A **third** manifestation of the tension between strategy and structure is **leadership succession**. Turnover in leadership provides an organization with new ideas and ways of working. At this stage in its evolution, UArctic should consider whether key leadership roles should be described more precisely and if such roles should have specified terms of duration. The team stresses again that the less formal, more personalized approach pursued to date by UArctic’s leaders has been *highly successful and appropriate* for the birth of UArctic and its initial development stage. Yet, moving forward, the management of the network should change from a more entrepreneurial, personalized approach of relationship-building and management to one that is more formalized and less dependent on the individuals who are leading UArctic.

With this transition comes a need for a comprehensive and detailed succession plan which includes recruitment and hiring procedures, as well as plans for knowledge transfer. Such plans are important for an organization at any stage, as staff transition to new positions or leave the organization. Procedures need to be in place to retain their knowledge and memory for others in the organization. This has become especially critical for UArctic as the current leaders approach retirement; UArctic needs to immediately begin a transition phase in leadership.

Indeed, this need for planning for transition was noted in the last review of UArctic<sup>10</sup>, a decade ago, yet little has been done to address this vulnerability.

UArctic has reached a point of maturity where transitioning from an entrepreneurial, relationship-driven, visionary network to an organization where tacit knowledge and relationships are institutionalized in processes, systems and structures that support its strategy and mission. Leadership development and succession planning are essential for the longer-term sustainability of the network.

### Recommendations for Governance, Structure, Management and Finances

- **Review, consolidate, and simplify the organizational structure.** The organizational design and structure of UArctic, irrespective of whether it adopts a distributed or centralized model, needs to be consolidated and simplified at this time in its evolution. The revised schematic structure publicly available on the website does a good job of moving UArctic in that direction, but this also needs to be reflected internally. This includes a clear and understandable leadership structure, transparent decision-making, coherent portfolios, and coordinated and integrated management systems. As a rule of thumb, structure should follow strategy. Senior Management should therefore conduct a structure and strategy review to ensure alignment.
- **Formalize the VP positions, with clearer definition of their portfolios.** When UArctic activities might span more than one portfolio, while recognizing such connections, clarify which VP position is responsible or how responsibilities are shared.
- **Better integrate the VP Indigenous within the wider senior leadership team of UArctic.** At present, this role sits largely as an outlier. Given the importance of indigenous peoples to the Arctic mission, this role has an important function to perform in ensuring that indigenous voices and priorities are reflected in key decisions made by the SMT.
- **Provide more support for VPs and other senior staff,** recognizing that their responsibilities have grown rapidly with UArctic's growth in both number of members and activities.
- **Develop a UArctic Conflict Resolution Process.** Disagreements and disputes among employees, committee members, and members are inevitable in organizations; to have a clear process by which to resolve such, to which employees and members agree, helps to ensure that conflicts can be managed and resolved with minimal negative effect on operations of the organization.
- **Develop a culture of publicly recognizing the efforts of staff and the many volunteers** who make UArctic a prosperous organization.

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<sup>10</sup> From the 2013 external review of UArctic: "The ERT recommends that the current Board Chair makes it his responsibility to prepare **a successorship plan** for the President and Vice-Presidents so that UArctic can respond quickly should any senior officer leave the organization."



## Recommendations for Succession of Leadership

- **Develop a comprehensive and detailed succession plan which includes recruitment and hiring procedures, as well as plans for knowledge transfer as a matter of urgency.**
- Establish a **leadership development process** to ensure that institutional knowledge is retained when there is a staff and leadership turnover.
- UArctic needs to **institutionalize** the many connections, processes and networks that are currently in the heads of leadership. This needs to be codified and documented into written processes and systems to facilitate turnover and institutional memory.

## Understanding UArctic's Impact

Over the past decades, UArctic has grown in prestige and influence as an arctic actor. Its educational programming, research activities through its Thematic Networks, and activities with partners have definitely had an impact on and in the North, as well as for its member institutions. Yet it is difficult to evaluate what UArctic has most notably achieved in relation to its mandate, goals, and strategic objectives - and concomitantly, where are the greater shortcomings in realizing these.

An organization's ability to provide clear, substantiated answers to questions about its impact can be highly advantageous in terms of attracting and maintaining members, partners, funders, and other supporters (e.g., government departments). Evaluations of impact can affirm accountability and may educate an organization on ways to improve its desired influence. At the same time, such evaluations require resources that might be used instead for achieving further impacts. The EET asks: Would an investment in the evaluation of UArctic's impact have a positive payoff *at this time*? Such an assessment should be carried out in the not-too-distant future, but with careful consideration of the resources (financial and human) that would be required, and the best timing for making these available, considering other priorities (as discussed above).

UArctic strives to communicate the importance of the Arctic globally, as well as share activities and events with its members and associated networks. The *Shared Voices* magazine has inspired many to engage in UArctic activities and enhances global knowledge of the Arctic. The UArctic website provides basic information on the network activities but is cumbersome to navigate. Newsletters are helpful but may be duplicative in content of other Arctic organizations. UArctic hosts several meetings to help bring the network and partners together. While these activities may be important in increasing the influence of UArctic, it is unclear as to how effective each is in reaching the intended audience and meeting expectations and needs. It may be helpful to work with a professional non-profit communications firm to develop a more effective communications strategy and plan, including evaluation and analytics of impact of communication channels and meetings.

UArctic currently faces an evolving geopolitical situation that provides critical challenges to its ability to continue to act as a truly *circumpolar* network. UArctic's key accomplishments include the robust integration of Russian institutions, scholars, and students in all of its activities. As a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, UArctic has now paused relations with Russian members, which has left a large void in circumpolar collaboration. At present, over half of the Arctic, in terms of both population and territory, is not involved in UArctic activities, a huge setback to collaborative efforts to address the Arctic's most pressing challenges.

In the past decade UArctic has expanded to include members from non-Arctic countries. With changing geopolitical situations, this makes UArctic, as a collaborative international network, increasingly vulnerable to emerging tensions across the globe.

### Recommendations for Enhancing UArctic's Influence

- Ensure that the mission and purpose of UArctic are clearly articulated and that current UArctic activities clearly reflect its stated mission.
- **Develop an accessible method for interested parties outside the UArctic network**, such as policymakers, business sector professionals, etc., **to come to UArctic with a request for advice on Arctic issues** - and then a process within UArctic to respond to that request.
- **Undertake a detailed evaluation of UArctic's activities** to look at its impact and influence, both quantitatively and qualitatively after careful consideration of the optimum timing and resourcing for such.
- **Create and support opportunities** for members and TNs to showcase leading research results at non-arctic meetings, expanding UArctic's reach and impact.
- **Clearly articulate the aims and expected outcomes** of each activity, as it is developed, to help with evaluating its impact.
- **Conduct an evaluation** of UArctic communications and revise the strategy accordingly. A more organized 'public' newsletter is needed, more targeted mailings may be useful, and the website may need a more strategic user experience analysis.
- **Plan the Assembly meeting together with the UArctic Congress and/or Rectors Forum** to help increase effectiveness of all events, reduce carbon footprint and strain on meeting travel for participants.

### Recommendations for the Dynamics of the Geopolitical Arena

- **Explore whether to launch specific efforts to help continue to facilitate researcher-to-researcher and student-to-student collaborations with Russians**, acknowledging the importance of collaborative efforts to address Arctic issues and the circumpolar nature of many such challenges, but also the political realities of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the variation in details of responses to the invasion adopted by the different countries in which UArctic member institutions reside.
- Recognizing that tensions arise with various countries from time to time, and that UArctic is a network of institutions across the globe, **put in place processes to agilely develop plans for addressing new challenges that may confront UArctic because of**

**geopolitical turmoil. Draw on experts within the UArctic network to scenario-plan for a range of geopolitical developments** that might affect UArctic in the next decades (e.g. through a dedicated workshop).

- UArctic strives to put a Northern focus on its activities. With increasing non-Arctic members, the balance between ‘For the North’ and ‘By the North’ can become challenging. Develop, with input from members, a strategic plan to underscore and maintain the original **‘For the North, By the North’ mission of UArctic**.

## Moving Forward

In preparing for this review, the External Evaluation Team members dedicated considerable time in acquainting themselves with UArctic, through a study of the relevant documents and discussions with many key players both internal and external to UArctic. The EET is impressed by the breadth and quality of the activities UArctic has accomplished. They encourage the organization to continue to build strong connections for the benefit of the Arctic and its residents. With this report, the team hopes to help UArctic continue its important mission to support cooperation in education, research, and outreach to enhance human capacity in the North, promote viable communities and sustainable economies, and forge global partnerships. The team strongly suggests the UArctic Board of Directors carefully review the report and develop a *focused plan*, with an *associated timeline*, to implement the recommendations as soon as possible. While the *UArctic Implementation Plan and Work Plans*, a companion document to its *Strategy 2030*, includes activities and timelines, it involves many more undertakings, and overlooks some of the issues this review raises.

By engaging the evaluation team, a group of international, independent, insightful, and professional consultants with vast knowledge of UArctic has been formed. The leadership is encouraged to continue to use this investment in knowledge and appreciation of the work of UArctic as they develop plans to address the recommendations and as the organization continues into its next phase.

## Appendix:

# 2023 UArctic External Evaluation Recommendations

## Suggestions of specific action examples

- ◆ *In addition to the recommendations in the report, the review team was asked to provide more specific examples. In this appendix, the report recommendations are listed as well as some ideas for specific actions that could be taken to address some of the recommendations (where review team members felt they held expertise to do so).*

**Simplify, clarify, consolidate and reaffirm the commitment to Northern education opportunities.**

### Recommendations on Fundraising

- **On appointment of a Director**, develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy that draws on the recommendations outlined in the UArctic/GG+A action plan and addresses key questions contained therein. This is a robust document but has not been implemented in full due to the lack of a professional Director.
- **Implement a comprehensive and integrated strategy.** The action plan by UArctic/GG+A provides such a strategy and operational plan. This can be adapted to fit the specific circumstances of the UArctic, but successful philanthropy requires such a strategy.
- **Refine fundraising priorities based on the strategy.** Specifically involve members in the formulation of funding priorities and campaigns as part of further enhancing a ‘culture of philanthropy.’
  - ◆ *There are many aspects of UArctic that would benefit from fundraising besides climate change research. Consider developing offers for people interested in supporting international education, humanities research, science communication and outreach, etc.*
- When hiring process is complete, **provide the Executive Director of Development with the necessary administrative, strategic, and financial support** to succeed in their job.
  - ◆ *Introduce the hire to areas of the Arctic they may not be familiar with.*
  - ◆ *Explore with the new Director hiring additional administrative staff to support any missing skill sets.*
  - ◆ *Develop a clear set of responsibilities for the Director role and discuss how that will work practically.*
  - ◆ *Give the Director freedom to explore new avenues and listen to their feedback on the initiatives and organization.*
- **Create a transparent and well-understood internal process for accounting for and allocating the funds** raised and with a clear communication strategy to keep the full UArctic community informed. CASE Global Reporting Standards is a useful guide.
  - ◆ *Produce an annual/bi-annual fundraising plan to show what areas will be targeted for that time period and include information about what happens to funds when received (i.e., to whom they will be allocated, are they ‘ear-marked’, can individuals apply for them and if so, by what process and according to what criteria,).*

## Recommendations on Indigenous Perspectives and Northern Community Engagement

- **Concretely identify how UArctic activities have affected people of the North, and how UArctic might most effectively positively contribute going forward.**
  - ◆ *Conduct a quantitative and qualitative impact study of UArctic across the Arctic and globally (or have such conducted as part of a graduate-level project at a member institution)*
  - ◆ *Hold listening sessions with Northern communities; include politicians, elementary and high school teachers, business leaders, elders, youth, and others who are concerned with the future of the community.*
- Consider what new efforts and approaches are optimal to support critical educational needs and research opportunities for northern residents, including Indigenous Northerners.
  - ◆ *Conduct interviews/listening sessions with northern residents to see what types of skills they are interested in having training in and what ways that training could be effectively implemented.*
- **Clarify the roles of the Vice President-Indigenous and Avatitsinni** (Indigenous Advisory Committee), and their relationship to each other; **better incorporate both into UArctic's governance structure.**
  - ◆ *At the time of writing the report, we understand this is in progress. It may be beneficial for the VP Indigenous to chair the Avatitsinni and act as a liaison between the group and other administrative parts of UArctic.*
- Ensure that both the **VP-Indigenous and Avatitsinni are sufficiently resourced** with administrative assistance and funding to perform their duties.
  - ◆ *The VP and the committee need dedicated administrative support and resourcing to sustain activities. This includes funds to cover salary and time commitments of admin support and committee members.*
- Ensure that the roles of the **VP Indigenous and VP Northern Community Engagement are clearly defined** in relation to each other, and that the two persons have opportunities to work collaboratively on all issues of common concern.
  - ◆ With high expectations for the impact of the **VP Northern Community Engagement**, ensure this position has adequate administrative and travel support for necessary circumpolar activities.
- Enhance the impact of UArctic's activities in Northern communities by increasing community-based initiatives and community involvement in activities.
  - ◆ *Incentivize thematic networks with funding to work with communities on initiatives and educational activities.*
  - ◆ *Together with the Avatitsinni, develop a fundraising campaign for Northern educational activities.*

## Recommendations for Education and Training

- **Increase UArctic's focus on post-secondary / undergraduate educational opportunities.**
  - ◆ *With feedback from listening sessions from various Arctic rights holders, develop innovative training and educational programming for post-secondary / undergraduate students. This could include online certification and diploma programs, undergraduate field schools, international internships, etc.*
  - ◆ *Increase awareness through targeted communication efforts of the undergraduate courses available through UArctic initiatives and members.*
- **Solicit input from northern communities** and potential northern students about what is most needed in terms of educational opportunities and delivery methods.

- ◆ *Conduct listening sessions as mentioned above.*
- ◆ *Ensure adequate planning for new/re-invigorated undergraduate post-secondary educational offerings and follow up on outcomes.*
- Charge the VP Academic to **implement new ways to engage UArctic students**, drawing on the help of experts from member institutions to use new pedagogical practices, both on-line and in-person.
  - ◆ *At present, the mandate of the VP Academic is not clear. Consider revising this position to VP Students, with the main responsibility is to oversee the coordination of post-secondary educational opportunities, collect input from students and use that to inform and adjust various UArctic elements to optimize post-secondary undergraduate opportunities.*

## Recommendations for Mobility/Exchanges

- Provide mobility exchanges that are more tailored to Northern Indigenous student needs, including exchanges with Indigenous institutions beyond the North.
  - ◆ *These may include short-term exchanges, online-community meet and greets, exchanges that provide childcare, exchanges that help the student bring back a specific new skill that will benefit their community, etc.*
- Enhance online / virtual opportunities for mobility experiences.
  - ◆ *As this is likely happening already post-pandemic, UArctic may be in a position to help provide the infrastructure for online exchanges by having a shared Zoom that groups could use, or other online chat forums that people could participate in, etc.*
- Pursue additional funding mechanisms to open exchange experiences to all in the Arctic.
  - ◆ *UArctic could help to develop international arctic internships aimed especially at arctic residents, within various aspects of Arctic society, including tourism, sustainable development, resource management, logistics, fisheries, space technologies, etc.*

## Recommendations for Thematic Networks (TNs)

- Improve communication and collaboration among/across TNs, including providing funding opportunities that require the participation of more than one TN.
- Reinforce the importance of including northern residents in TNs and their activities as this can help enhance local research capacity and interest in post-secondary education.
  - ◆ *As mentioned earlier, this could be an area where additional fundraising funds could be applied to incentivize networks.*
- Incentivize TNs to create teaching modules for undergraduate delivery, including high-quality online teaching and learning opportunities.
  - ◆ *There are very limited resources for international educators and researchers to work together to develop teaching resources. UArctic could achieve a lot with a relatively small funding pool in this area. Consider a targeted ask for a donor(s) to help raise funds to develop educational resources.*
- **Utilize the creativity and knowledge of TNs** to help identify and develop inspiring foci for fundraising.
  - ◆ *Make sure the Director of Development meets with all TN leads to help identify potential fundraising foci.*
- Increase administrative and resources support for TN activities.

- ◆ *The TNs seems to be where the most activity of UArctic is occurring, yet there is only one VP and a part time admin person supporting these activities. More coordination/admin support would likely yield more results and impact, so consider increasing staff resources.*
- When TNs cease, retain an archive of their activities online for historical purposes.
  - ◆ *Keep an area on the UArctic website, with public access, to house TNs that have shut down as this serves as an important archive of past activities and a great resource for people looking to start a new network.*

## Recommendations for UArctic Chairs

- **Ensure/ actively create opportunities for UArctic Chairs to interact**, with the desired outcome to be the establishment of fertile and more holistic research collaborations among them on topics crucial to the well-being of the Arctic and its residents.
  - ◆ *Organize discussion sessions at various meetings, continue online meetings, devote funding resources for workshops for chairs and related TNs to meet.*
- **Utilize the creativity and knowledge of UArctic Chairs** to help identify and develop inspiring foci for fundraising.
  - ◆ *Make sure the Director of Development meets with all UArctic Chairs to help identify potential fundraising foci.*
  - ◆ *Engage chairs in reviewing fundraising ideas.*
- Ensure Chair positions are available for representatives of Northern Indigenous groups and at smaller northern institutions; prioritize following through on the plan to create one or more Indigenous Chairs.
  - ◆ *It is likely that special funds will need to be raised for these positions. This should be a UArctic priority.*
- Provide adequate central support mechanisms to assist the Chairs in identifying, planning, and coordinating their collaborative activities.
  - ◆ *Consider adding a part-time staff member to help coordinate chair activities, in addition to the staff that helps the VP Research.*

## Recommendations for Membership

- **Pay special attention to supporting Indigenous organizations and small northern institutions** as UArctic members, and to prioritizing their interests and needs in teaching, learning, research and knowledge sharing,
  - ◆ *Support their participation in UArctic events.*
  - ◆ *Task the VP Indigenous to help identify the support needed for these organizations and institutions to fully participate in and benefit from UArctic activities.*
  - ◆ *Have the Director of Development identify potential funders and resources needed for the financial aspects of this support.*
- As interest in, and the reputation of, UArctic increases **ensure that growth in membership does not dilute the original mission to support small northern institutions and northern populations.**
- As membership changes, ensure the development of strategic management structures of the membership and proper staffing to handle additional administrative load.
  - ◆ *A VP Membership may be useful. The VP Research position might be merged with the VP Thematic Networks to enable the VP Membership position without expanding the number of VPs. A VP Membership would help to liaise with all members, recruit new members, foster*

*membership collaborations, and ensure that the distinct needs of indigenous organizations and small northern institutions are addressed and fulfilled.*

## Recommendations for external partnerships

- Clarify the criteria used to determine with whom to pursue new partnerships; explicitly connect these criteria to the recruitment of new partners and the development of UArctic projects. Ensure that the vision and mission of UArctic are supported by new partners and underpin new projects.
  - ◆ *Develop stronger partnerships with non-academic/science partners (e.g., Arctic Mayors Forum, Arctic Economic Council, Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators) where certificate programs may be beneficial (i.e. Arctic Business Certification, Arctic EcoTourism Certificate) to local residents as well as others interested in working in the Arctic region.*
  - ◆ *The Frederik Paulsen Arctic Academic Action Award, in partnership with Arctic Circle, deserves more marketing and promotion. This important award needs to be more widely known in and beyond the Arctic, to ensure a robust set of nominations.*
- External partnerships should be announced and communicated about strategically in newsletters and other communications to help promote the partnership and encourage members to interact with these partners.

## Recommendations for Governance, Structure, Management and Finances

- **Reorient the structure and mentality of UArctic from the current entrepreneurial approach to a more institutionalized organization.**
  - ◆ *Before launching new initiatives, develop a thorough plan, assess all linkages to other areas of UArctic, identify necessary resources and where they will come from, and consider what may need to be cut or prioritized less, in order that the new activity can launch successfully and flourish.*
- **Review, consolidate and simplify the organizational structure.** The organizational design and structure of UArctic, irrespective of whether it adopts a distributed or centralized model, needs to be consolidated and simplified at this time in its evolution. The revised schematic structure publicly available on the website does a good job of moving UArctic in that direction, but this also needs to be reflected internally. This includes a clear and understandable leadership structure, transparent decision-making, coherent portfolios, and coordinated and integrated management systems. As a rule of thumb, structure should follow strategy. Senior Management should therefore conduct a structure and strategy review to ensure alignment.
  - ◆ *Ensure that each VP portfolio is well defined and complements the other VP portfolios.*
    - *It is not clear what the VP Academic and VP Research do that is not done in the VP Mobility or VP Networks. It may be more understandable/efficient to have a VP Students and a VP Membership instead, and to merge the VP Research and VP Thematic Networks.*
  - ◆ *The terms used to define different positions within the organization do not follow a 'typical' organizational structure. This is perhaps because positions have been added over time. Consider restructuring the organogram with consistent position descriptions/terms. For example, Secretary General and Executive Director are typically used to describe the administrative head of an organization so there may be some confusion. If the Secretary structure is to be used, consider changing the Executive Director of Development to the*



*Secretary of Development or change Secretary General to Executive Director and Director of Development - showing a clear lineage of responsibility in the terminology.*

- *Chair of the Board, President, Executive Director, Director of Development/ Development Director, Director of Communications / Communications Director, Communications Officer, Administrative Officer, etc.*
- **Formalize the VP positions, with clearer definition of their portfolios.** When UArctic activities might span more than one portfolio, while recognizing such connections, clarify how responsibilities are shared.
- **Better integrate the VP Indigenous within the wider senior leadership team of UArctic.**
- **Provide more support for VPs and other senior staff,** recognizing that their responsibilities have grown rapidly with UArctic's growth in both number of members and activities.
  - ◆ *As mentioned above, additional support staff may be needed to help support the increased activities of the organization.*
- **Develop a UArctic Conflict Resolution Process.** Disagreements and disputes among employees, committee members, and members are inevitable in organizations; to have a clear process by which to resolve such, to which employees and members agree, helps to ensure that conflicts can be managed and resolved with minimal negative effect on operations of the organization.
  - ◆ *Develop such a process with UArctic staff; vet with UArctic chairs and TN leads, to ensure full commitment.*
  - ◆ *Make sure staff and others are aware of the UArctic Conflict Resolution process and require new staff, TN leads and Chairs to agree to engaging in the process when disagreements occur.*
- **Develop a culture of publicly recognizing the efforts of staff and the many volunteers** who make UArctic a prosperous organization.
  - *Consider a staff or volunteer/committee member feature in every newsletter as a simple yet effective way to publicly thank the people behind the scenes recognize otherwise unseen contributions.*
  - *In public speeches at events, thank individual staff/volunteers by name. This simple gesture can mean a great deal to those who have worked hard behind the scenes.*

## Recommendations for Succession of Leadership

- **Develop a comprehensive and detailed succession plan which includes recruitment and hiring procedures, as well as plans for knowledge transfer as a matter of urgency.**
- Establish a **leadership development process** to ensure that institutional knowledge is retained when there is a staff and leadership turnover.
  - ◆ *When having strategic meetings, dinners, trips, involve less senior staff along with the President and/or Secretary General. Having other staff interact and network with potential and existing partners contributes to expanding and maintaining institutional memory.*
- UArctic needs to **institutionalize** the many invaluable connections, processes and networks, knowledge of which is currently held by senior leaders. Such information needs to be fully documented to ensure its availability to successors and other key players in UArctic.

## Recommendations for Enhancing UArctic's Influence

- Ensure that the mission and purpose of UArctic are clearly articulated and that UArctic activities clearly reflect its stated mission.

- ◆ *The principal original purpose of UArctic was to enhance post-secondary educational opportunities for arctic residents; the importance of this mandate remains paramount to many. Yet the most visible UArctic activities today are research networks. It would be beneficial to communicate more about UArctic educational activities.*
- ◆ *Encourage TNs to contribute more to the post-secondary educational opportunities in the North and for northern residents and recognize and celebrate the activities of those TNs who do this.*
- **Develop an accessible method for interested parties outside the UArctic network**, such as policymakers, business sector professionals, etc., **to come to UArctic with a request for advice on Arctic issues** - and a process within UArctic to respond to that request.
  - ◆ *Consider developing an 'Ask an Arctic Expert' blog/forum on the UArctic website/social media and advertise to relevant leaders in various sectors of society that UArctic has a wide network of people who can help provide advice. When someone asks a question, use the network to help find an answer and encourage the development of new collaborations with the UArctic academic network with those outside academia.*
    - *Timely response would be critical to such an undertaking; thus, assigning responsibility for this initiative, and monitoring its implementation would be critical.*
- **Undertake a detailed evaluation of UArctic's activities** to look at its impact and influence, both quantitatively and qualitatively, after careful consideration of the optimum timing and resourcing for such.
  - ◆ *Such an evaluation can be costly in terms of personnel's time and financial resources; while needed by the organization, determining the optimal time to launch such an effort is critical.*
- **Create and support opportunities** for members and TNs to showcase leading research results at non-arctic meetings and in non-arctic media/via non-arctic channels, expanding UArctic's reach and impact.
  - ◆ *Non-arctic member institutions may provide channels such as newsletters, bulletins, websites, etc. for such communications.*
- **Clearly articulate the aims and expected outcomes** of each activity, as it is developed, to help with evaluating its impact.
- **Conduct an evaluation** of UArctic communications and revise the strategy accordingly.
  - ◆ *A more organized 'public' newsletter is needed. The current un-organized stream of events and items is of marginal use.*
  - ◆ *Consider a quarterly newsletter with sections (and a Table of Contents) . Contents might include: key UArctic activities in various realms, featured staff member (see above), featured activities of TNs, featured students/mobility participants. follow-up on what Frederik Paulsen Arctic Action Award recipients are doing, etc. A list of upcoming events/conferences could be offered under a section heading.*
    - *If this recommendation is adopted, a means of evaluating the success of a revised approach to the newsletter should be designed and its implementation planned.*
    - *More targeted mailings may be useful.*
  - ◆ *The UArctic website could benefit from a more strategic user experience analysis.*
- **Plan the Assembly meeting together with the UArctic Congress and/or Rectors Forum** to help increase effectiveness of all events, reduce carbon footprint and strain on meeting travel for participants.

## Recommendations for the Dynamics of the Geopolitical Arena

- **Explore whether to launch specific efforts to help continue to facilitate researcher-to-researcher and student-to-student collaborations with Russians**, acknowledging the importance of collaborative efforts to address Arctic issues and the circumpolar nature of many such challenges, but also the political realities of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the variation in details of responses to the invasion adopted by the different countries in which UArctic member institutions reside.
  - ◆ *UArctic could help to facilitate online workshops and topic meetings that could include individual researchers from all Arctic and non-Arctic countries to help keep dialogue channels open.*
- Recognizing that tensions arise with various countries from time to time, and that UArctic is a network of institutions across the globe, **put in place processes to agilely develop plans for addressing new challenges that may confront UArctic because of geopolitical turmoil. Draw on experts within the UArctic network to scenario-plan for a range of geopolitical developments** that might affect UArctic in the next decades (e.g., through a dedicated workshop).
  - ◆ *If not already in place, develop a **conflict resolution procedure** which could be useful for not only geopolitical issues, but internal governance and dealing with Indigenous issues as well.*
- UArctic strives to put a Northern focus on its activities. With increasing non-Arctic members, the balance between 'For the North' and 'By the North' may become challenging. Develop, with input from members, a strategic plan to underscore and maintain the original **'For the North, By the North' mission of UArctic.**

*The Review Team would be happy to have a discussion to help the Board develop an action plan to follow up on these recommendations and participate in follow-up activities if desired.*