



## **AIEA Thematic Forum**

**The United States as an Arctic Nation – Opportunities for Collaboration in Internationalization  
Hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Dartmouth College  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
May 7-8, 2017**



Julien Schroder - #WOTA17

### **Facilitators:**

**Donna Anger**

**Director, International Programs & Initiatives, University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**Dr. Melody Brown Burkins**

**Associate Director for Programs & Research, The John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding;  
Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies, Dartmouth College**

## Icebreaker Reception – Sunday, May 7

Pikes Waterfront Lodge, Binkley Room



The Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers welcomed Thematic Forum participants in sharing the culture, traditions and heritage of the Iñupiaq people through song and dance. Fairbanks is located in the interior region of Alaska and as group members are residents of Fairbanks, the group name "Pavva," was chosen due to its meaning in Iñupiaq 'away from shore, landwards, toward the mountain' because the dancers reside in Fairbanks rather than in the Northern region of their parents and grandparents. The group leader, Dr. Sean Topkok, Iñupiaq name Asiqtuq, is an assistant professor in the UAF School of Education. As part of a broad range of international activities, Dr. Topkok represents UAF in the UArctic Thematic Network Verdde Program initiated in 2004 to connect Indigenous circumpolar students and teachers and strengthen international collaboration between Indigenous groups in teacher training and teaching of Indigenous minority languages and cultures. Dr. Topkok's research interests include multicultural and Indigenous education, decolonization and Indigenist methods and methodologies, working with communities to help them document their cultural heritages, and community well-being.

### Thematic Forum Outline and Format

Morning sessions consisted of two 30-minute presentations followed by small-group discussion of participants' a) personal/professional experience; b) aspirations/visions and c) actual or potential barriers/challenges/opportunities. Each group identified action items for consideration and presenters made recommendations to support engagement of participants beyond the Thematic Forum.

### Session I

#### Arctic Research in an International Context—Bridging Research and Education

**Dr. Larry Hinzman**, Vice Chancellor for Research; Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dr. Hinzman provided an overview of critical areas of Arctic research in a global context and the role of SIOs in developing mobility programs in alignment with research priorities. Vice Chancellor Hinzman shared perspective on opportunities for collaboration with Arctic and non-Arctic partners and activities with greatest potential for bridging research and educational programs. Dr. Hinzman recommended resources for information on topics of greatest relevance to the Arctic and professional organizations of interest to international educators.

## Highlights and Resources:

Arctic Research Priorities for the next decade:

- The role of the arctic in the global system
- Observing and predicting future climate dynamics and ecosystem responses
- Understanding the vulnerability and resilience of Arctic environments and societies and supporting sustainable developments

Resources, networks, professional organizations:

- UArctic
- IASC – International Arctic Science Committee
  - Works with early career scientists, provides opportunities for leadership development
- PolarTREC
  - Teachers and researchers exploring and collaborating – pre-college students and K-12 teachers
  - Translates research into the classroom and gets students engaged at an early age

**Breakout Session #1: Consider the current status of research in your area of expertise/experience; what you envision for the future; what are barriers/challenges; identify action items.**

## Discussion points and action items identified by participants:

Group 1:

- Challenges in working in Arctic studies
- Time (working with communities on a circumpolar level, businesses, etc. – maintaining these relationships requires time, which Western institutions don't allow for – pressure to constantly publish impairs time)
- Creating methods to sustain those relationships into the future
- Cultural differences – not just Western/non-Western, but across disciplines, e.g. Sciences and humanities
- Real world connections are what makes research relevant

Action item:

1. Identifying what the challenges are, being aware of that and doing what we can with students/colleagues

Group 2:

- Moving away from lecture classroom environment, towards group learning
- Sociability of the students who are from rural communities, esp. those where schools have been closed due to lack of enrollment
- Address them by looking at Indigenous pedagogies from places like the North Slope
- Focus on content area on what needs to be taught and how it can be taught through place-based education

Action items:

1. To be meaningful, you need to engage the teachers as active, supporting partners
2. Recognize that you are not only teaching, but are learning from community
3. More collaboration and communication across all groups – teachers, administrators, policy makers, etc.

Group 3:

- Integrating communication between natural and physical sciences
- Bringing in indigenous knowledge in a meaningful and distinct way
- Scholarly groups listening to what is of interest to find out what could be areas of research
- Collaboration between groups from different nations
- Encouraging place-based education/problem-solving

Action Items:

1. Request groups increase budget scope
2. Finding out ways to combat research fatigue
3. Share resources
4. Encourage collaboration

#### Group 4:

- Main barrier is financial
- Political barriers
- Communication barriers, combating entrenched perspectives
- Value of experiential / applied learning

#### Action Items:

1. Collaboration / Partnership building
2. These all have educational aspects
3. Interdisciplinarity
4. Promote exchange of ideas and people



#### Session II

#### Indigenous Engagement in the Arctic—Implications for Internationalization

**Evon Peter**, Vice Chancellor for Rural, Community & Native Education, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Vice Chancellor Peter provided an overview of indigenous representation within the Arctic and the critical value of Indigenous engagement in research and education within and external to the Arctic. Vice Chancellor Peter shared experience and examples with particular relevance to those seeking to expand institutional partnerships and collaboration in domestic and international program development with an Indigenous focus.

#### Highlights and Resources:

- Arctic Indigenous peoples are represented by six organizations with status as Permanent Participants:
  - Aleut International Association
  - Arctic Athabaskan Council
  - Gwich'in Council International
  - Inuit Circumpolar Council
  - Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
  - Saami Council.
- Principles and Declarations
  - Kiruna Declaration – 2013 “Recognize that the use of traditional and local knowledge is essential to a sustainable future in the Arctic, and decide to develop recommendations to integrate traditional and local knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council”
  - Ottawa Traditional/Indigenous Knowledge Principles – 2014 “The co-production of knowledge requires creative and culturally appropriate methodologies and technologies that use both Traditional Knowledge and science applied across all processes of knowledge creation”



#### Core concepts

- Build trusting relationships
- Because of history of exploitation, it is important to build relationship at community level before beginning project
- Partnership at all levels / CBPR
- Native voice at all levels of project
- Local relevance
- Invest in local capacity
- Reciprocity in practice
- If researchers are working with / engaging in communities, there needs to be a mutual benefit
- Understand limited capacity

- Leverage resources to support local engagement and activity
- Narrow focus / pilot projects
- Example: PC (Promoting Community) Cares
- Suicide prevention initiative
- Working WITH communities

#### **Institutions, organizations resources:**

- Sami Education Institute - Finland
- Sami University of Applied Sciences - Norway
- Ilisimatusarfik - Greenland
- Ilisagvik – Utqiagvik, Alaska
- World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC)
- Indigenous Peoples Secretariat

**Breakout Session #2: Consider the current status in your area of expertise/experience in Indigenous engagement; what you envision for the future; what are barriers/challenges; identify action items.**

#### **Discussion points and action items identified by participants:**

##### Group #1:

- Issues with contract research – can be associated with academic research and ruin relationships
- No process to involve local communities in governments to create policy
- Researchers often see no role for locals
- Outreach can increase trust and increase acceptance of research activity
- Increase access and quality of rural education programs
- Real-time deliverability for transferable education
- Continuity – same liaison person to be in contact with native community

##### Group #2:

- We should look at existing models that are successful though cross-cultural communication
- Look at ones that aren't successful as well
- Meaningful indigenous engagement at all stages
- Flip the models for what has generally been acceptable practice for the past 100 years that changes it to something that listens to how communities want projects to be developed – not just top-down approach
- The role of funding agencies in driving the research model – involve community in creating research model
- Evaluation frameworks – what defines capacity? What frameworks are appropriate?

##### Action items:

1. look for models that are successful and see what works,
2. look for models that are unsuccessful and fix them

##### Group #3:

- Engage in dialogue with the funder about the community need vs. the funder goal
- Try to engage different actors in the communities that are non-traditional to the system

##### Group #4:

- Consultation and Free and Prior Informed consent with Indigenous nations
- Invisibility of Indigenous peoples, convenience of researchers to forget to conduct research in a respectful manner
- Long-term relationships through ally-building and sustainability
- Build up institutional knowledge to interface with communities
- Reporting must be in an appropriate and accessible format
- Need to share with communities so not just extractive and exploitative

## 12:00 Lunch (provided on-site)

Afternoon presenters and panelists shared experience and outlined opportunities through the Arctic Fulbright Initiative, Arctic Engagement for Policy and Diplomacy, the Model Arctic Council and UArctic.

### Afternoon Welcome and Remarks

**Brian Rogers**, Chancellor Emeritus, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Chair, Board of Governors, UArctic

Chancellor Emeritus Rogers opened the afternoon sessions with an overview of the UArctic network and its vision and mission of empowering the North. In stating that the U.S. role in the Arctic expands beyond Alaska he shared the openness of UArctic members to new partnerships and stressed the significance of UArctic Thematic Networks in building collaboration across barriers and in creating opportunities for students in research and mobility.



### Session III Panel

#### Fulbright Arctic Initiative - International Collaboration in Community Engagement

##### Session Chairs

**Dr. Michael Sfraga**, Director, Polar Initiative, Woodrow Wilson Center/Smithsonian Institution; Affiliate Professor, International Arctic Research Center, UAF; Co-Lead Scholar, Fulbright Arctic Initiative

**Dr. Ross A. Virginia**, Director, Institute of Arctic Studies, Dickey Center for International Understanding, Dartmouth College; Co-Lead Scholar, Fulbright Arctic Initiative

As Co-Lead Scholars of the 2015-2017 Fulbright Arctic Initiative, Dr. Sfraga and Dr. Virginia reviewed their unique experience working with a multidisciplinary group of Fulbright Scholars selected from across the Arctic region. These scholars are engaged in one of three working groups to address energy, health and infrastructure, and water as areas of critical importance to Arctic nations. Fulbright Scholar panelists highlighted linkages they established and how, as a cohort of distinguished Arctic scholars, they are able to influence education and perspective at their home institutions and globally. Dr. Sfraga and Dr. Virginia discussed opportunities to partner with Arctic Fulbright Scholars using examples of the Fulbright Arctic Symposium held in February, 2015 at the University of Oulu in Finland, and educational outreach events to be held in Washington, DC in October, 2016. These examples demonstrate the broad impact of a regionally focused, high-profile U.S. Arctic initiative with implications for SIOs in program development and community outreach.

## Highlights:

- Many participants previously acquainted due to the limited number of individuals involved in this work
- The Arctic is “The Last Global Frontier”
- Goal was to support and be coordinated with and be affiliated with the U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship
- Public outreach and applied research that is relevant to policy issues in a very deep and important way
- A new Fulbright model that is multi-lateral, multi-disciplinary, interactive, responsive and informs the public
- Impacted 8 nations, 17 scholars, 2 co-lead scholars, 12 disciplines, 3 thematic working groups, 4 focal areas over a period of 18 months
- Themes:
  - Energy:
    - How will energy resources be developed in the arctic?
    - What can be done to promote clean renewable energy, reduce pollutants, guarantee the inclusion and rights of indigenous communities?
  - Water:
    - How can we understand, mitigate, and adapt to the dramatic changes predicted for the Arctic Ocean?
  - Health:
    - How can wellness be defined in an Arctic context?
    - What are the opportunities to increase individual and community health around issues such as subsistence and food security, availability of medical care, and infrastructure, etc.?
  - Infrastructure:
    - How can we rethink infrastructure needs and challenges and the connections with health, energy and security issues?
- Outcomes:
  - Ongoing collaborations
  - Understanding Peace in the Arctic, June, 2017 conference in Tromsø, Norway
  - Forthcoming joint publications
  - New international research partnerships
  - Fulbright Arctic Initiative II to be launched late, 2017

## Panelists

**Terhi Mölsä**, Chief Executive Officer, Fulbright Finland Foundation

Ms. Mölsä gave an overview of the Fulbright Arctic Network and discussed opportunities for engagement in the context of Finland’s leadership of the Arctic Council. She shared that the Foundation is promoting a wider exchange of knowledge and the professional talents between Finland and the United States and shared details of ongoing and new initiatives as well as the services and networks participants have access to through the Fulbright Finland Foundation and the Fulbright Arctic Network. In reference to Fulbright Arctic Initiative II, Ms. Mölsä advised participants that 2018-2019, coincides with the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council, that Fulbright Finland will support the chairmanship with special scholarships and initiatives with emphasis on education and on cooperation in research.

Fulbright Arctic Initiative Scholars **Gwen Holdmann**, **Tamara Harms** and **Greg Poelzer** spoke about their experience as inaugural Fulbright Arctic Scholars in the areas of Energy and Infrastructure, Water and Ecosystems and how they are continuing to expand education, outreach, research collaboration within and external to the Arctic. The partnerships they have established and the collaborative work they will continue as a result of the Fulbright Arctic Initiative have local and international implications.



**Gwen Holdmann**, Director, Alaska Center for Energy and Power, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Fulbright Arctic Initiative Scholar, Energy and Infrastructure

Director Holdmann shared her experience studying sustainable utilization of resources and resulting local and international project and partnership developments. In referencing her individual project on how local energy development can support healthy, sustainable policies in Iceland, Director Holdmann described how has Iceland become leader in geothermal energy development and how can that be transferred globally. She further shared her experience in the development of training programs in microgrid technologies and of the Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy.

**Dr. Greg Poelzer**, Professor, School of Environment and Sustainability, Founding Director, International Centre for Northern Governance and Development, University of Saskatchewan; Fulbright Arctic Initiative Scholar, Community Sustainability and Renewable Energy

Dr. Poelzer focused his efforts and expertise on addressing barriers by actively engage communities in the earliest stages of project planning and development and collaboration in local level renewable development and capital development by facilitating equity ownership opportunities for northern communities. Dr. Poelzer's contribution to research, development and export is based on supporting cultivation of opportunities for knowledge export and he remains actively engaged in applied research with the Alaska Center for Energy and Power, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Saskatchewan and SaskPower. Collaborative projects include a feasibility study on deployment of renewable energy in northern Saskatchewan and mapping of pan-arctic circumpolar off-grid settlements.

**Dr. Tamara Harms**, Assistant Professor, Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Fulbright Arctic Initiative Scholar, Water and Ecosystems

Dr. Harms shared the findings and outcomes of Water Thematic Group, an interdisciplinary group that worked together on predictions for the future of the Arctic Ocean and studied how changes in physical drivers change biological activity of the ocean, which affects humans. Two main approaches to coping with uncertainty of the future of the Arctic Ocean are long-term monitoring and scenario analysis. Dr. Harms also addressed the freshening of the Arctic Ocean and she explained the science of related recommendations.

## **Session IV Panel**

### **I. Arctic Science Policy and Diplomacy**

**Melody Brown Burkins**, Associate Director for Programs & Research, The John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding, Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies, Dartmouth College

Dr. Burkins provided perspective on the importance and role of science diplomacy in educating the next generation and in ensuring a sustainable Arctic future. She noted that the large parts of the Arctic are not represented in maps of global research collaborations. Though this is expected given fewer research institutions in remote areas, it is still an opportunity for greater investment to improve research collaboration equity. Dr. Burkins went on to emphasize that students majoring in the sciences represent the largest proportion of U.S. students studying abroad that this ties in well with STEM aspects of the commitments and work of the Arctic Council. Further, considering Indigenous representation through the Permanent Participants and the focus on Indigenous knowledge systems, the need collaboration is critical in developing "Science Diplomats" through connection of scholarship to global challenges, scholarship to policy and diplomacy, and international and collaborative problem solving with respect to and for community engagement.

As examples of international curricular integration with an Arctic focus, Dr. Burkins described programs offered through the Institute of Arctic Studies and the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College such as the First Year Great Issues Scholars Program for undergraduate students and the former NSF IGERT program for graduate students, which – though no longer supported by NSF – continues in how graduate students studying Arctic issues are regularly made aware of science communication and science policy issues during their academic program. With regard to faculty-led and partnership initiatives, Dr. Burkins shared examples of faculty-led research fellowships, the NSF-funded Joint



Science Education Project (JSEP) for high school STEM education outreach done in collaboration with the U.S. Greenland and Denmark, the UArctic Institute for Arctic Policy, and strategic support of the development of partnerships to support connections to arctic science policy and diplomacy in student mobility and exchanges, and policy relevant student research designed in collaboration with a diversity of Arctic stakeholders and partners.

## **II. Model Arctic Council—UArctic Thematic Networks and Curricular Integration**

**Mary Ehrlander**, Director, Arctic and Northern Studies Program; Professor of History, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dr. Ehrlander opened the session with a description of the Model Arctic Council (MAC) objectives:

- To develop students' knowledge of the Arctic as a region, circumpolar politics, and northern Indigenous peoples
- To increase students' understanding of Arctic Council objectives and processes
- To prepare students to assume leadership roles in the circumpolar north
- To further student and faculty collaboration within the University of the Arctic (UArctic)

She went on to describe the collaborative structure of the MAC as a UArctic Thematic Network and the vision of a fully international, biennial simulation that will rotate around the circumpolar north to coincide with the rotating chairship of the Arctic Council. During intermittent years, U.S. UArctic member institutions will host MAC-related events such as the "Science & Diplomacy in the Arctic" program hosted by Dartmouth College in June, 2017 that includes to include a MAC simulation embedded in the program.

To emphasize the depth and scope of the event, Dr. Ehrlander provided an overview of the features and activities of the inaugural program held at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in March, 2016:

- Weeklong program including simulation, lectures, special events, and excursions
  - Focus on actual challenges facing the Arctic
  - Some issues are highly sensitive
  - Student participants have direct contact with these challenges
- Substantial role of the Permanent Participants
- Consensus model, rather than majority rule
- 65 students from 32 university and 14 birth countries simulated 2 working groups
  - Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) - "Improving Health through Safe and Affordable Access to Household Running Water and Sewer" (WASH) and "Reducing the Incidence of Suicide in Indigenous Groups—Strengths United through Networks" (RISING-SUN),
  - Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) - Cruise ship tourism and Managing maritime traffic for marine resource development
- Simulated Senior Arctic Officials (SAO Meetings)
- Simulated Ministerial Meeting

**Brandon Boylan**, Associate Director, Arctic and Northern Studies; Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dr. Boylan provided background the educational components of the Model Arctic Council discussed the evaluation process.

Academic Components:

- Academic preparation on issues and roles through courses, readings, written position statements
- Collaborative incorporation of lectures by world-class experts on Arctic topics
- Experiential
  - Simulating the work of the Arctic Council
  - Collaborating and engaging with scholars, Arctic Council delegates and dignitaries, UArctic leadership
  - Providing rich academic and cultural experience for students within/external to the Circumpolar North

Evaluating the MAC 2016

- Publication – Ehrlander, Mary F., and Brandon M. Boylan. "The Model Arctic Council: Educating Postsecondary Students on Arctic Issues and Governance through Simulation." *International Studies Perspectives* (2017).

- Four data sets evaluated: debriefing session post simulation; mid-program (post simulation) survey; post-program survey (two weeks after); student comments throughout and post MAC (via email)
- 83% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they had learned more about the Arctic Council during the simulation program than they would have in a conventional classroom setting
- 98% would recommend MAC as a valuable experience

### III. University of the Arctic (UArctic) Network as a Model for Engagement

**Donna Anger**, Director of International Programs & Initiatives, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Director Anger gave an overview of the UArctic as a dynamic network of 175 + Arctic and Non-Arctic Member colleges, universities, research institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North.

- 2020 goals
  - Educational Access for Northern Students
  - Research Representation in the North
  - Expanding Knowledge of the North
  - Engaged Membership Network
- Opportunities for collaboration
  - Thematic networks are groups of members working together to conduct research and create learning experiences, including mobility and place-based
  - Circumpolar studies courses offer a base level of knowledge about the Arctic, can be embedded into undergraduate curriculum and considered as preparation for mobility

Discussion Questions:

- Implications of increasing awareness, interest in the Arctic
- International aspects of Arctic and implications for mobility (students, staff, faculty, community members)
- Critical international skills, knowledge for leaders, workforce
- Opportunities for collaboration

**Dr. Michael Castellini**, Interim Dean, Graduate School, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Vice President Academic, UArctic

Dr. Castellini summarized goals as UArctic VP Academic on UArctic activity and outreach as “Choir, Voice and Whatever.” Expanding on these terms, he emphasized the following:

- Individuals such as those attending the AIEA Thematic Forum and Week of the Arctic events are the “Choir” in terms of awareness and understanding of the importance of the Arctic.
- As members of Arctic communities, we must be the “Voice” that communicates the importance to those outside of the Arctic and in doing so, affirm that students and others seeking to understand and support Arctic issues can make a difference and that their voices are critically important.
- We must recognize the certainty of indifference, “Whatever” and “Why should we care about the Arctic?” and that indifference is the most significant challenge we face in communicating the importance of the Arctic and why those outside of the Arctic should be aware of and educated about its value.

Follow-up to discussion questions:

- Implications of increasing awareness, interest in the Arctic
  - Champions are needed in community, education and government who understand, and can successfully negotiate, the differences within and between agencies and organizations throughout the Arctic.
- International aspect of Arctic and implications for student mobility
  - Students are drawn to programs such as those Dartmouth is offering and we can implement components of these and other models to offer Arctic-focused exchanges between U.S. states and internationally.
- What are the critical international knowledge and skills required for leaders and workforce in the Arctic?
- Continue to offer and seek opportunities for collaboration such as those offered through UArctic and by bringing issues of the Arctic to the next AIEA Annual Meeting and other international education conferences.

Joint Networking Reception hosted by:

Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Thematic Forum and Arctic Broadband Forum 2017



Archived video presentation

[AIEA Thematic Forum: The U.S. as an Arctic Nation—](#)

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### **1. Thematic Forum Outcomes**

**Awareness** of importance of collaborative, meaningful and respectful approach to research activity and follow-up with Indigenous communities.

**Collaboration** through potential AIEA session proposal to discuss Arctic collaboration in education and participation in the Model Arctic Council simulation event to be held at Dartmouth College, June, 2017.

**Learning** on all levels about existing and potential opportunities for engagement and exchanges and the importance of student mobility.

**Networking** across disciplines and educational and organizational cultures based on mutual interest in Arctic and Arctic issues.

**Positive advocacy** and concerted effort in support of creativity in integration of research and education in Arctic communities through multiple school districts, federal agencies, Arctic community members, and research institutions.

**Rich discussion** between business and community leaders, higher education and K-12 administrators, educators, faculty, researchers staff and students.

**Willingness** to continue dialog and contribute to participant review of discussion and action items as a means to effect change.

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**2. Lessons Learned or Insights for Senior International Officers**

**Senior International Officers are instrumental in** engaging representation across, and external to, institutional cultures and must continue and support efforts to expand awareness and collaboration in developing and providing opportunities for mobility.

**There is a need for, and interest in, convening** on topics of interdisciplinary, international and regional thematic importance such as the Arctic.

**There is relevance at all levels** of Arctic research and education, and willingness to support integration of research and education in Arctic communities.

**Effecting comprehensive and meaningful change** in education and research in the Arctic requires Arctic community members, administrators and educators in K-12 and higher education, funding agencies and organizations and the research community. All have a role in addressing indifference to the Arctic and Arctic issues.

**There is a need to increase awareness and visibility** of existing opportunities for collaboration in Arctic education, mobility and research such as those available through the UArctic network.