

The Role of the Nordic Universities in the New Arctic

Research forum on Grand Challenges in the Arctic Reykjavik, 12 October 2017

Expected participants: approx. 25 Arctic researchers from NUS universities
Venue: University of Iceland, University Center (build. No. 3)

Climate change, industrialization and globalization have put the Arctic on the map in new ways; ways that have incited the world to reconsider the region and its populations, and how they are approached. Reports, strategies and analyses have been developed to meet the local and global challenges that have arisen. The Arctic is entering into a new era of decision-making, which requires public awareness, new governmental structures and institutions and a global outlook. Without doubt, the Arctic societies are challenged, as are researchers in regards to grasping developments in the new Arctic reality.

Consequently, the past decades have seen the establishment of new institutions and platforms for research collaboration and knowledge exchange. Also, research in, with and for a new Arctic must include a discussion about the role of the Nordic Universities in the years to come.

That discussion is complicated by the fact that the present-day Arctic is a region that is so culturally, politically, socially and economically diverse.

In Reykjavik in October 2017, a large group of researchers from the Nordic Universities will attempt to move the Arctic research agenda on global and local challenges forward by bringing together a variety of Arctic scholars, each with their own scientific background, approach, and understanding of the Arctic. Five grand challenges have been identified and will be explored in workshops led by Nordic experts within their individual fields of study.

Program: Research forum on Grand Challenges in the Arctic

- 12:00 Light lunch will be served at The University Center
- 13:00 Welcome by Rector at University of Iceland, Jon Atli Benediktsson
13:05 Welcome (Per Michael Johansen, Chairman of NUS)
13:15 Introduction, (Anne Merrild Hansen and Lill Rastad Bjørst, AAU Arctic)
Venue: HT 300
- 13:30 Parallel theme sessions
Grand challenges in the Arctic
Presentations and debate
- 16:00 Plenary
Summary of main conclusions/issues by group chairs
Discussion and identification of key points for the Rectors meeting
Venue: HT 101
- 17:30 Round-off

Theme forums:

The theme sessions will be structured according to five challenges identified by the Arctic Council and in the EU Arctic Policy recommendations. Each challenge calls for approaches and solutions involving multiple disciplines from various sciences, including technology and natural science, social science, humanities and health.

During each theme researchers will present examples of projects conducted within the field of the topic and highlight issues for discussion.

The five grand challenges are:

1. Sustainable business development
2. Robust and independent welfare communities
3. Safety (incl. fruitful and peaceful co-existence)
4. Climate and environmental protection
5. Education and cooperation