

NORTH ATLANTIC CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION (NAC³)

How It Began

In the summer of 2014, a group of WKU students participated in a study abroad program via Semester at Sea themed “A Climate Change Challenge,” which involved traveling to several countries aboard the MV Explorer ship to study the science and communication of climate change. This trip included three stops in Iceland and culminated with the WKU students presenting to a group of over 100 people in Iceland from the University of Akureyri, local communities, regional environmental agencies and ministries, and the tourism bureau about what they had learned regarding climate change during their travels. Plans for a service-learning project (via The \$100 Solution™) were revealed by each class. These included adopting a glacier and donating to the Extreme Ice Survey, developing an online platform for the dissemination of a climate change curriculum, purchasing a carbon offset, and planting a climate “Tree of Change” at the University of Akureyri. To reciprocate such a meaningful symbol of climate change cooperation, two sister trees were planted on WKU’s campus to serve as meeting points for future discussions about climate change.

From that interaction, a relationship was fostered between WKU, the University of Akureyri, and the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network that continues to grow. From the beginning, Mr. Orn Gudmundsson, Honorary Consul from Iceland to the Central United States, and his son, Orn

Gudmundsson Jr., provided valuable assistance and advisement by coordinating government support from Iceland and by guiding the collaboration on several fronts.

Through identifying mutual goals, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed to solidify an education, research, and economic development partnership to address the impacts of climate change.

The first tangible outcome from the MOA will be a joint course in Iceland set for summer 2015 that will focus on the climate change theme and include both WKU and UNAK faculty and students.

Major Goals of Collaboration

- 1) To establish collaboration with Iceland, fostered by synergy with the University of Akureyri and Iceland Arctic Cooperation Network, to pursue mutual interests in academic research, student engagement, service learning, and economic development.
- 2) Enhance partnership and collaborations through appropriate governmental channels, including the consul from Iceland to Kentucky, where appropriate to foster projects that align with international Arctic cooperative agreements.
- 3) Build capacity for institutional knowledge exchange in the areas of sponsored programs, fundraising, and community relations.
- 4) Develop internship programs for student exchange between institutions involved in the collaboration.
- 5) Promote NAC3 programs and activities toward the success of the collaboration as it mutually benefits all partners and encourages further understanding and protection of the Arctic region.
- 6) Provide opportunities for the development of joint academic classes and programs

in areas such as climate change, climate literacy, Health & Wellness, ocean dynamics,

The University of Akureyri (Háskólinn á Akureyri) is located in Northern Iceland and has served Akureyri and its rural surrounding since 1987. The University has built a reputation for academic excellence and good industrial relations. Located in the capital of Northern Iceland, Akureyri, the University has been instrumental in the economic growth of the region and is central in the planning for a future as a knowledge based society.

The University of Akureyri prepares students for a wide range of opportunities in both the private and the public sectors. Education offered by the University aims at providing its graduates with specific skills and knowledge of scientific methods as well as theoretical skills that will enable them to improve their qualifications. Education and research are closely linked to achieve this, first and foremost by assigning equal importance to them in the daily work of the academic and scientific staff and whenever possible course work is based on research.

The University was founded in September 1987, by establishing two Faculties, in Health Sciences and in Industrial Management. The University is at present operating in three Schools; School of Business and Science, School of Humanities and Social Sciences and School of Health Sciences. The number of students is around 1800 and members of staff are around 180.

Western Kentucky University is a public comprehensive university located in Bowling Green, Kentucky. WKU embraces a proud heritage and a bold, ambitious future. WKU is in the midst of a transformation - physical,

intellectual, cultural and economic – and is becoming A Leading American University with International Reach. Across the globe, WKU faculty and students are engaged in relevant applied research that provides solutions to real problems. WKU is home to many highly ranked and nationally-recognized academic programs, including several international programs as well. The fastest growing university in Kentucky for 13 years straight, more than 20,000 students grace WKU campuses throughout the state. A place where all students can succeed, WKU is proud to have Kentucky’s first and only independent Honors College.

The goal of the **Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network (IACN)** is to facilitate cooperation amongst Icelandic public and private organizations, institutions, businesses and bodies involved in Arctic issues – among other things in research, education, innovation and monitoring, or other activity relevant to the Arctic region.

The Network Seeks to:

- Heighten communication and facilitate cooperation within Iceland regarding Arctic issues.
- Enhance visibility of the role and work of public and private institutions and organizations in Iceland involved in Arctic issues.
- Provide information and resources concerning Icelandic activities, knowledge and experience in Arctic issues to academia, policy makers and the public.
- Improve distribution of and access to information concerning the Arctic in the context of Iceland.
- Provide support for cooperation on Arctic issues within Iceland.
- Provide guidance and consultation as requested.



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Climate Change
Climate Literacy
Environment
Fisheries
Health & Wellness
Ocean Dynamics
Sustainability
Water Resources

