



UArctic Assembly Meeting / Inari, Finland / June 2025

Agenda item: 6.2

Proposal – Election of Board Members

Proposal: The UArctic Nominations Committee proposes that the Assembly makes the following decisions:

- a) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Martin Fortier** as member of the Board of UArctic for a three-year term (2025-2028).*
- b) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Brad MacKay** as member of the Board of UArctic for a three-year term (2025-2028).*
- c) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Janne Näkkäläjärvi** as member of the Board of UArctic for a three-year term (2025-2028).*
- d) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn** as member of the Board of UArctic for her second three-year term (2025-2028).*
- e) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Aaja Chemnitz** as member of the Board of UArctic for her second three-year term (2025-2028).*
- f) *The Assembly accepts the nomination and elects **Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson** as member of the Board of UArctic for his third and final three-year term (2025-2028).*

References: [UArctic Constitution](#) / Article 5 – Governance and Administration
[UArctic Bylaws](#) / Sections 4 – UArctic Board; and 4.2 – Election of the Board
[Martin Fortier – Motivation letter and CV](#)
[Brad McKay – Nomination and Motivation letters](#)
[Janne Näkkäläjärvi – Motivation letter and CV](#)

Background:

The members of the Board are elected by the Assembly from slates of nominees prepared by the Nominations Committee. Nominations may also be made by any member representative at any Assembly in which a Board election takes place. In Board elections, the aim shall be to seek a gender balance and a regional distribution of members, where at least one member shall be from an Arctic Indigenous people within the Circumpolar North.

The Nominations Committee has started implementing a strategy for Board nominations, where larger countries US and Canada continue to have two seats on the Board, and the smaller Arctic countries Iceland, Sweden, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Finland have one seat regularly. Currently there has been three



seats vacant for Russia, and in the future the Committee would keep two seats vacant for Russia, instead of the current three. Two seats could, be for representatives of Non-Arctic countries or Business sector. The remaining two seats would be filled with indigenous representatives.

On candidate evaluations: UARctic's Nominations Committee members discussed strategies for filling vacancies, and reviewed the performance of the Board members ending their terms. Following an evaluation of potential candidates, Committee members prepared a final slate of the following nomination candidates.

In June 2025, the Board members **Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn** and **Aaja Chemnitz** will end their 1st terms at the UARctic Board, and are all eligible for a 2nd term. At the same time, **Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson** and **Robert Sauvé** will end their 2nd terms. As Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson is serving as the Vice-Chair of the Board, he is eligible for a 3rd term. However, Robert Sauvé is can't be elected any more. Board Vice-Chair **Jouko Niinimäki** has resigned from the Board, effective 31 March 2025, due to his appointment as UARctic Executive Vice-President.

The Nominations Committee reviewed the performance of Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn, Aaja Chemnitz and Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson, and unanimously supported electing them for three-year terms at the Board. They all have confirmed their interest in continuing at the Board for 2nd/3rd term.

To fill the vacancies after Robert Sauvé and Jouko Niinimäki the Nominations Committee received three nominations: **Martin Fortier** (Université Laval, Canada), **Brad MacKay** (University of St Andrews, UK) and **Janne Näkkäläjärvi** (Sámi Education Institution, Finland; Indigenous quota). The Nominations Committee unanimously supported electing all three for three-year terms at the Board.

The Nominations Committee decided to leave three vacancies open in the Board (one reserved for indigenous representative, two for Russia).

Nominated Candidates:

Martin Fortier	Martin Fortier is Vice rector for Research and Innovation at the Université Laval in Quebec, Canada. He has a long career in Arctic and Northern education, research and collaboration.
Brad MacKay	Brad MacKay is the Deputy Principal and Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, UK. He has worked closely with UARctic in both Thematic Network and Regional Centre (Scottish Arctic Network ScAN) level.
Janne Näkkäläjärvi	Janne Näkkäläjärvi is the Development manager at the Sámi Education Institute in Inari, Sápmi, Finland, and holds several positions of trust in Sámi civil society. He is Sámi and has worked closely with Arctic Indigenous People.
Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn	Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn is the Vice-Chancellor of Luleå University of Technology at Luleå, Sweden. She is an active member of UARctic's Board and the Board's Finance Policy Advisory Group.
Aaja Chemnitz	Aaja Chemnitz is a Greenlandic Member of Parliament of Denmark/Folketinget. She has actively contributed to the work of UARctic Board, especially in indigenous engagement in UARctic. She is Inuit.
Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson	Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson is Professor of Geophysics at the University of Iceland at Reykjavík, Iceland. He is an active member of the Board, serving as



Board Vice-Chair II, and member of the Board's Finance Policy and Philanthropic Fundraising advisory groups.

Current members on the Board of UArctic:

Frederik Paulsen (Chair)	Switzerland	1 st term as Chair (2022-25), Board member 2017-22
Anne Husebekk (Vice-Chair I)	Norway	3 rd term 2024-27
Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson (Vice-Chair II)	Iceland	2 nd term 2022-25
Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn	Sweden	1 st term 2022-25
Lesley Brown	Canada	1 st term 2023-26
Aaja Chemnitz	Greenland	1 st term 2022-25
Tore Furevik	Norway	2 nd term 2024-27
Johanna Ikäheimo	Finland	2 nd term 2024-27
Pat Pitney	USA	2 nd term 2024-27
Robert Sauvé	Canada	2 nd term 2022-25
Barbara Will	USA	1 st term 2024-27

Rationale:

UArctic Constitution, Article 5 – Governance and administration:

The annual Assembly of the association shall elect the Board. - -

In Board elections, the aim shall be to seek a regional distribution of members, and at least one member shall be from an Arctic Indigenous people within the Circumpolar North.

UArctic Bylaws, section 4 – UArctic Board

Each member of the Board serves a three-year term, and each term shall commence and conclude at the corresponding annual Assembly.

Following a review by the Nominations Committee, each member of the Board is eligible for reelection for a second term. The Board Chair and members having served as Board Officers, again following a review by the Nominations Committee, are eligible for re-election to the Board for a third and final term.

UArctic Bylaws, section 4.2 – Election of the Board

The Chair, members and student representatives of the Board are elected by the Assembly from slates of nominees prepared by the Nominations Committee. Nominations may also be made by any member representative at any Assembly in which a Board election takes place. - -

The election of Board Chair, members and student representative by the Assembly requires support by more than half the votes cast. If votes are equal, election is resolved by the casting of lots.

Nominees to the Board should have the following qualifications:



- *commitment to the mission and values of UArctic*
- *personal integrity*
- *freedom from conflicts of interest*
- *demonstrated judgement*
- *willingness to commit time and energy to UArctic*
- *high credibility with key UArctic constituencies*
- *not personally bankrupt*

As a group, the Board should reflect the following qualities:

- *sensitivity to the concerns of the major Arctic constituencies*
- *understanding of UArctic's mission and values*
- *awareness of educational needs in the Arctic*
- *knowledge of major Arctic trends*
- *professional experience in higher education, business, law, or public service*
- *understanding of fiduciary responsibilities of the Board*
- *access to public and private funding sources*