

Opening Remarks by Dean Howard

I'm Judy Howard, the Divisional Dean of the Social Sciences in the College of Arts & Sciences.

It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you all to the University of Washington, on behalf of the College of Arts & Sciences, the Jackson School of International Studies, and the Center for Canadian Studies. Today's program is one example of the University of Washington's deep institutional commitment to the study of the Arctic region. We are committed to both educational programming and scholarly research on issues and challenges that arise in the Arctic and how they impact those both within and beyond the region. As you know, the UW is one of just two institutions in the lower 48 that is a member of the University of the Arctic, a membership that is critical to our being able to prepare our students to deal with this critical emerging region. We have a number of academic units that address Arctic issues: among them, the Polar Science Center, the College of the Environment, the Law School, the Jackson School of International Studies, Anthropology, and numerous other departments in which courses on the Arctic are being taught. We now have an Arctic Studies minor in our curriculum, and its classes fill up immediately, a sign that our students too recognize how vital this region is to their futures.

Many of our efforts are channeled through the Center for Canadian Studies. Canadian Studies is deeply invested in educating UW students on the Arctic region and on its indigenous populations, and to creating collaborative programs with Arctic organizations and communities. I want to call out especially the leadership of Vince Gallucci, Professor in the Dept of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences in the College of the Environment, and Director of the Center for Canadian Studies, and Nadine Fabbi, the Associate Director of the Center. They are both utterly committed to our Arctic Programs. I also want to highlight that we have with us today our fourth US-Canada Fulbright Visiting Chair in Arctic Studies, Heather Nicol, Professor of Geography at Trent University.

The purpose of our meeting today is to reflect on the almost 20-year history of the Arctic Council and its influence on Arctic policy in North America. The Arctic Council was created in recognition of the need for an international coordinating body to address Arctic issues from both governmental and indigenous perspectives. Your discussions today will address many aspects of whether these goals have been achieved and what will be needed to continue this work in the years ahead. Among the important foci are questions of whether we have achieved full integration of nation-state and indigenous organizations in influencing the activities of the Arctic Council? If not, what changes will enhance and ensure the voices of the Permanent Participants in Council proceedings? There has of course also been tremendous interest and growth in observer status – how will these relationships between non-Arctic nations and permanent participants evolve? How has the Arctic Council shaped Arctic policies for Canada and for the U.S.? We have an exciting new liberal government in Canada now – how might this shape Canada’s perspectives and involvement in the Council? Now that the U.S. has begun its second round of Chairing the Council, and as we approach the end of President Obama’s Presidency, what might we anticipate from U.S. leadership?

These are absolutely critical questions. Changes in the Arctic have immediate effects on the regions that touch on the Arctic, but these changes ultimately will and in many cases already have affected every other country on this globe. The work you will accomplish today and in the years ahead could not be more urgent.

Many thanks to each and every one of you for the work you do on this exceedingly critical topic, and for joining us today. And now let me turn the program over to Chinsoo Lim, the Vice President of the Korea Maritime Institute. The KMI is taking the lead within Korea for Arctic activities. Canadian Studies and the Jackson School have a collaboration with the KMI, instantiated in this meeting today.