



BARENTS CROSS-BORDER UNIVERSITY RECTOR MEETING, OULU FEBRUARY 20, 2009

The Barents Cross-Border University (BCBU) Rector meeting was held on 20th of February 2009 in Oulu. The meeting was hosted and chaired by the University of Oulu, Rector Lauri Lajunen, and the University of Lapland, Rector Mauri Ylä-Kotola.

For a start, the representative of each present partner university gave a short situation report on the respective Master's programmes in their universities. Altogether it was stated with gratification that, as the result of the BCBU cooperation, the first BCBU Master's programme has already started in January 2009 (Master's programme on Health and Well-being in the Circumpolar Area), and next two will start in autumn 2009 (Master's programme in Comparative Social Work and Barents Master's programme on Environmental Engineering). The fourth, Master's programme in the field of information technology, will start in autumn 2010. In the current international competition in higher education, it is important that the programmes distinguish from the other international Master's programmes with their uniqueness or their specialty, in this case Barents or Northern focus. In addition, when moving from planning into implementation, the role of quality work is of great importance, and there is a need for a joint BCBU quality assurance policy and strategy for consideration at all levels of the programmes. The participants discussed possibilities to start new Master's programmes within the BCBU context, status and roles of the partner universities, financial issues, agreements, and development plans of the project.

In addition to discussions, Outi Snellman, Vice-President, Administration, UArctic introduced the University of the Arctic, Hanna Honkamäkilä, EU-coordinator, UOulu, told about the funding possibilities and instruments, and Katja Kurasto, Project Coordinator, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, presented marketing possibilities of the BCBU Master's programmes through Study in Oulu –marketing project. The Vice-Rector Hondo from the University of Hokkaido gave a short presentation of the university and its interests in BCBU concept and in involvement in the Master's programmes in the fields of information technology and environmental engineering.

The Rector meeting agreed on the initiation of development of a new Master's programme in law, updated the status of the partner universities, and gave strong support for joint funding applications. Furthermore, it was agreed that every Master's programme will prepare and sign programme specific agreements on implementation in compliance with the current BCBU agreement.

The next Rector meeting will be organized in Rovaniemi in the beginning of 2010. It will be a two-part meeting consisting of a seminar and the Rector meeting. Rectors of all universities in the BCBU Master's Programmes, other collaboration partners, Barents policy makers etc. will be invited in the seminar.

Next Vice BCBU Rector meeting and working group meetings will be organized in autumn 2009 in Petrozavodsk.