

January 12, 2026
Calotte Academy 2025

Travelling the Nordic Arctic: A Glimpse into our Journey with Calotte Academy 2025

Taylor Hoggarth, Natalie Smith, and Jillian Archer
NAADSN Research Fellows

Calotte Academy is an annual travelling forum that invites international senior and early-career researchers to discuss interdisciplinary dialogue on circumpolar Arctic Studies. A main goal for this academy is to “foster academic and policy-oriented dialogue among members of the research community and a wide range of other northern stakeholders.” At each stop of the academy, a series of presentations by the participants is shared. Due to ensuring interdisciplinary discussions and the open-ended nature of dialogue, presentations must hold significant time following the presentation to allow discussion and questions. Thus, the structure for each presentation is 15 minutes of presenting, followed by 15-20 minutes of discussion and questions.

At this year’s Calotte Academy, the theme was “The Future of Europe - A Northern Point of View.” Some of the presentations’ topics included New geographies of Arctic militarization: On military land use and Indigenous rights in Sápmi; Greenland: Actors’ engagement towards the renewable energy ecosystem; A Green Transition of Euro-Arctic Industry: The Swedish experience in global context; and The European Union between blue justice and maritime security: The Ocean Pact and its implications for the Arctic.

In addition to presentations, the cohort also participated in a role-playing game. This game consisted of a mock-international-negotiation-style role-play that lasted all five days. The goal of the game was to spark negotiations regarding the future of Europe, specifically between the objectives of green transition and the pressure of militarization. Stakeholders such as the U.S.A., Canada, RAIPON, the UN, Greenland, Greenpeace, and the EU were role-played by participants.

Following the annual Calotte Academy, a Final Report is published on the Calotte Academy’s website. This report is based on notes and reports written by participants chosen for each session and details the abstracts, main findings, highlights, and ideas for future sessions.

On November 9th, 2025, three NAADSN Research Fellows and Trent University MA Canadian and Indigenous Studies students – Taylor Hoggarth, Natalie Smith, and Jillian Archer – travelled from Peterborough, Canada, to attend Calotte Academy’s November 2025 session. Each of us had extensive experience participating in

ACTIVITY REPORT



conferences around the Arctic; however, we never had the opportunity to travel the countryside of the Nordic Arctic. Throughout this week, we will be travelling to rural and urban locations in Finland, Sweden, and Norway. During each stop of the journey, we would have opportunities to listen to colleagues' presentations, participate in a role-play game, and present our own presentations. Alongside stunning views of the Arctic, we were fortunate enough to learn from and with our peers from around the globe. A major highlight for us was meeting with like-minded individuals and growing our network of academics within circumpolar Arctic studies.



Dr. Heather Nicol, Jillian Archer, Natalie Smith, and Taylor Hoggarth outside of Čoarvemátta in Norway.

Our Journey

Throughout the week, we visited seven cities across the three countries. Our first destination stop of the conference was Rovaniemi, Finland. Presentations were held at the University of Lapland. This was an amazing campus to be able to explore. During our first day, topics regarding Sápmi and Greenland were discussed. In addition, during the first day, Jillian presented her research (see detailed description later in the reflection). After Jillian's presentation, we started the role-play game!

The second day brought us to Luleå Technical University in Sweden. At this stop, Taylor and Dr. Heather Nicol discussed their presentations.

Following the second day, we travelled to Hetta, Finland, where we would stay overnight for the next two nights. Although we stayed here for the nights, we would still travel to close locations during the day.

ACTIVITY REPORT

Day three was held in Kautokeino, Norway and was centred around Sámi topics and locations. We were very fortunate to hear from two individuals who researched with the Sámi. Their topics included *Indigenous governance and the case of Sápmi*, and experience with the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry in Kautokeino and researching within the UArctic EALÁT Institute. During this stop, Natalie presented her topic (see description below). We also visited Čoarvemáttá – a Sámi National Theatre, Sámi High School, Reindeer Herding School, and NOMAD Indigenous Food Lab. This was very interesting for us, and we loved seeing new developments towards culture revitalization in the Nordic Arctic. For Taylor, a Gwich'in and Anishinaabeg person, this was very eye-opening and a great opportunity to connect with fellow Arctic Indigenous people from around the world.

We travelled to Ivalo, Finland, on day four. Our day consisted of further presentations, a long drive, and excursions to Enontekiö Airport and a UTAC facility. The best part of this day was seeing the countryside – including many Reindeer sightings!



Reindeer sighting outside of Vuotso, Finland, while we were travelling to Inari, Finland.

On Friday, November 14th, we visited Inari, Finland, where we held our presentation and role-play forum at the SAKK, Sámi Education Institute. This was the final full day for presentations, and the main themes consisted of “Russian Perspectives” and “Global Commons”.

Lastly, on the final day, we finished our role-play game in Sodankylä Town Hall. This was a very interesting setting for the final role-play session. It truly felt like we were fully embodying the nature of the debate at this location, including final remarks. This simulation was at times a struggle, often leading to some frustration. However, at the same time, it was extremely impactful, allowing for an overflow of joy. Although we were facing real-life issues, we were able to have ‘fun’ role-playing with stakeholders and guessing on how they would react. A major highlight for us was Jillian’s enthusiastic attempt at ‘role-playing’ the United States of

America and guessing their stance on green transition and militarization in the Arctic. Taylor and Natalie played the role of Nunavut and Greenpeace, respectively.

Not only did this game allow for healthy dialogue and debate, but it was also a great forum for an ice-breaker. This game created an opportunity for participants who would not usually converse to strategize on debates and ask follow-up questions. We were able to learn about a glimpse into Europeans' perspective of green transition and militarization in the Arctic, while also building a network among like-minded academics.

Presentations

Taylor's presentation was based on their master's thesis and was titled, *We Are the Medicine: Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, Queer and Trans Indigenous Peoples' (2SIQTIP) Kinship, Healing, and Belonging on the Land*. For Taylor and many other 2SIQTIP people, the journey to understanding identity is not a clear path. There is a common lack of awareness that our identity can be intersectional. This lack of awareness can be attributed to an absence of representation of and guidance for being Queer in Indigenous communities. The lack of representation and cultural understanding has affected many 2SIQTIP, particularly in the North. Because of colonization, the teachings associated with being 2SIQTIP have been suppressed and lost. The Land itself is resistant in its being. The Land has shown throughout history and time that it is one of the most resilient beings. A lesson that many 2SIQTIP and others can relate to. The colonial gender binary system and heteropatriarchy were placed upon the Indigenous people of North America. We were taught through the residential school system, and other means of assimilation, these concepts. Unfortunately, as a result, many Indigenous nations lost their traditional teachings on Gender and Sexuality. However, the Land stayed true to its original instructions. The Land holds our truest form of identity as Queer folks: fluidity. The Land, the lakes and rivers, the wind, the sun, the moon, the rain, and the seasons are all fluid in their identity. The Land does not stay in one fixed motion; instead, it's constantly ever-changing. The Land understands and accepts our identity as it is. This was evident in my connection and discussion with the Land. In this discussion, Taylor examined the relationship with the Circumpolar Land for Indigenous Queer people, before and during colonization.

Natalie's presentation was based on her research interests and recent life experience working in the Canadian Arctic. Her presentation was titled, *Housing Insecurity & Youth in Nunavut*. Using policy documents, archival research and Federal and Territorial reports, Natalie sought to understand the process and experiences that led youth and young adults to either not have reliable permanent housing or live in conditions that may be considered unsafe. Natalie provided a cross-examination of housing conditions and existing infrastructure across Inuit Nunangat with supplementary information taken from current reporting in Alaska and Greenland. Across these regions, Natalie examined how many youth and families may find themselves living in temporary housing, overcrowded housing or housing that is structurally unsound, any given year. Investigating new trends in housing challenges, it was found that "hidden homelessness," or the experiences of young people and their families consistently living in temporary places, such as with extended friends or family, is on the rise. Inuit in Canada make up the country's highest proportion of young people; these youth must have access to housing that supports their physical-health and well-being, emotional and mental health needs, and education opportunities. While building costs in the Arctic remain high and changing climate conditions make

it difficult to produce adaptable housing projects, it is detrimental that we find solutions that meet the needs of youth and young families that are integrated to promote cultural safety, collaboration, accessibility, and health. Adaptable solutions may include retrofitting existing community buildings and offering drop-in programs that are open day and night, that provide intergenerational programming and services for youth.

Jillian's presentation focused on the embeddedness of colonialism in Ontario's energy policies. By employing historical and policy analysis, including archival research and Indigenous perspectives, the study traces the evolution of Ontario's energy infrastructure, from the development of early hydroelectric projects to the formation of modern electricity policy. These structures often reinforce unequal power relations, limiting Indigenous authority and shaping how energy development unfolds across the province. A main finding included the research highlighting that energy planning in Ontario cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the persistence of these colonial frameworks and their implications for Indigenous rights, environmental sustainability, and social equity. By situating contemporary policy within a postcolonial framework, this study underscores the importance of decolonizing energy planning and governance. It emphasizes that addressing structural inequities requires not only the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives but also a rethinking of how energy systems are designed, managed, and controlled. Such an approach is necessary to build energy futures that are socially just, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.

We found that the vast number of questions and feedback that followed our presentations allowed us to look at different perspectives regarding our research interests and topics. Ultimately, this created new dialogues that we have not yet examined. These lessons helped shape our research and research interests further. After the course of this conference, we were able to come back with stronger research views and interests.

Everlasting Impact

This opportunity did not just allow us to see the Nordic Arctic, but it also created life-long networking, friendships, and memories. Together, we were able to build a stronger friendship among the three of us while also growing our love and interest for the circumpolar Arctic.

A key takeaway from our involvement in the Academy and the role-play activity was the insight into dual-use and multi-purpose infrastructure, as well as the green transition dialogue. Interestingly, we were able to see from the role-play activity that participants who embodied the roles of Canada and Nunavut had sometimes contrasting views. At one point, on a vote regarding the use of green transition in the Arctic, Canada voted in favour; yet, Nunavut voted against it. Although this was a simulation and only an insight into the real-life events, we were able to determine the importance of adequate consultation with Northern and Indigenous communities.

This lesson can be transcribed into the MINDS Defence Policy questions, specifically the question of, "How could the Defence Team enhance cooperation with Northern communities and Indigenous partners, federal, provincial, and territorial partners, as well as the private sector, to address evolving threats and build climate resilient, dual-use or multi-purpose infrastructure?" Through our observations, it would have been extremely beneficial for Canada and Nunavut to collaborate and create a solidified vote together. However, this was not achieved in the role-play activity. Often many Northern and Indigenous communities are not properly

ACTIVITY REPORT



consulted on their perspectives – perspectives that bring valuable insight – regarding decisions on the communities that they currently occupy and live in. This was a crucial and valuable observation that the three of us were able to use in further developing our understanding of the inclusion and cooperation with Northern and Indigenous communities.

As previously alluded, this experience has had an everlasting impact on our studies and our commitments to circumpolar Arctic studies. This week-long journey gifted us unforgettable opportunities to participate in interdisciplinary and international perspectives, while also experiencing new Arctic regions. These experiences would not have been made possible without the generous support of NAADSN. We want to express our immense gratitude for the generosity they demonstrated.