



# Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)



## Developing a Global Learning Network

### CASE STUDY

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) has experienced firsthand the benefits of a learning platform at their campus. With a strong focus on Internationalisation – we spoke to Michael Moulton (the Head of the Learning Centre), to find out more about how UMB is using the platform to connect the stakeholders at their university and further develop partnerships in developing nations.

*Q. What role does the Fronter Platform play at UMB?*

Fronter has several roles here at UMB, but foremost it acts as a communication tool. You could say there was a silent revolution here when we started using Fronter to improve communication. When we look at statistics of how Fronter is being used, there has been a significant improvement demonstrated now by a tremendous amount of traffic between the faculty and students.

Secondly, we are using Fronter together with our Student Administration System – when students sign up for a class they are immediately put into a classroom in Fronter and the opposite if they withdraw. The faculty knows that the student list in Fronter is the official student list, reducing the amount of time spent on communicating with two separate systems.

Lastly, we realise that Fronter has a large potential as a pedagogic tool. All staff working at the Learning Centre are therefore now focusing on improving the pedagogical use of Fronter throughout the university.

*Q. What kind of cooperation takes place between UMB and other institutions inside and outside of Norway?*

Like most universities we have many partnerships with other institutions. Several of our partners in Norway are also Fronter users, which is great for teaching cooperation. With the Fronter Bridge tool we connect with other Fronter installations and are able to share courses and resources. We are very happy with this feature, as a teacher can log onto Fronter in their own installation and immediately have access to a room/course in our installation.



We are also exploring the possibilities of using Fronter in projects with our partner universities outside of Norway, especially the partners in developing countries. We are aiming for more effective cooperation by using the tools that are already available in Fronter.

*Q. How does UMB benefit from being involved in a network of Universities?*

UMB is a relatively small university with a strong policy of internationalisation. This means that we would like to increase our role and

presence within the global system of education. We are seeing that the more UMB can operate online, and be visible on the internet, the better off we are in terms of our goal for greater internationalisation - of course Fronter has a big role in this.



*“We are aiming for more effective cooperation by using the tools that are already available in Fronter.”*

Michael Moulton  
Head of the Learning Centre  
UMB

*Q. Can you give an example of one of your cooperation projects?*

For the last year we have been involved in a project in Chile, funded by the regional development agency. The project promotes vocational education opportunities for the indigenous population in Southern Chile, where there is a large Fish Farming industry. The vocational school conducts industry related courses in both Aquaculture and Feed Technology, aiming to increase indigenous employment. UMB aimed to provide this school with a learning community through Fronter, where different local and international stakeholders could contribute relevant resources and teaching material. We have built a resource room for Feed Technology and given commercial industry working within this area the opportunity to contribute. We also have cooperation partners at the university level in Chile, with access to a room in Fronter. In this room, they add resources and collaborate with the vocational school and industry.

*Q. What is the response from the school?*

We are very happy so far. All of the students (a total of 900 between the ages of 14 and 19 years), are set up with login details to Fronter, and teachers are collaborating in their own virtual staff room. They are now beginning to see the benefits of this learning community and the potential that it has.

*Q. Is there any specific government policy in Chile which is helping to promote e-learning?*

One of the exciting things in Chile is the government policy on internet access. They are very focused on providing internet access as a public service. This means that this particular vocational



Students and teachers in Chile listen to an online lecture hosted in Norway by the UMB.



school has very good access to a high speed internet connection, despite being located in a relatively undeveloped area in other aspects.

*Q. Who has contributed teaching resources in this project?*

At the moment UMB has been the main contributor of resources into the learning community. We started by contributing teaching resources on Feed Technology both in English and in Spanish. We are now trying to fill up with Aquaculture resources and commercial industry are contributing resources and flash animations into the system.

*Q. Is there a goal to expand the use of Fronter in this project?*

This particular vocational school is just one of many schools falling under one organisation working towards increasing education and training opportunities for the indigenous population. This organisation is very excited about our project and they are clearly interested in extending the project throughout the whole system. In addition we are strengthening ties with universities in Chile who will also become more involved and contribute to this growing learning community.