

LAUDATIO DOMINI HANNELE NIEMI PROFESOR HONORIS CAUSA

**Dear Professor Hannele Niemi,
Distinguished Members of the University Senate,
Dear colleagues and guests,**

Today's ceremony, dedicated to a personality who in recent years has redesigned the world's education map, will undoubtedly remain a memorable date in the Annals of the University of Bucharest and it will equally rest in our minds as a solemn event for all participants.

On behalf of the University of Bucharest, we have the honour and pleasure to hereby pay homage to Hannele Niemi, a prestigious and dedicated educationalist of the contemporary world. This is only a token of respect and high appreciation reflecting the Romanian perception of Hannele Niemi's work and personality in our country.

As a graduate of the University of Helsinki she obtained a Ph.D. degree in Education (1978) with Honors: Dissertation passed with "magna cum laude". She was also awarded two Master Degrees:

- Master of Philosophy (1994), Major in education, minors in psychology, social psychology, sociology, with Honors: Thesis passed with "Eximia cum laude approbatur"
- Master of Theology (1977), Major in pedagogy of religion instruction, minors in six other disciplines in theology with Honors: Thesis passed with "Laudatur"

Hannele Niemi, Ph.D, is a Professor of Education (1998 – present) at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki.

Throughout her career, Professor Niemi she has been involved in and on the cutting edge for emerging scientific research on education and behavioral sciences. *Her scientific research has focused on four major areas: Teachers' Professional Development and Research based on Teacher Education, Technology-based learning environments, Cross-disciplinary research on learning, Values in education and purpose of life.*

Professor Niemi is a pioneer on research on teachers' professional development and research-oriented teacher education has been recognized as ground breaking. She has published over 150 journal articles or chapters in

books as well as 18 monographs on these themes. She has been a co-editor and co-author of the book "Research-Based Teacher Education in Finland - Reflections by Finnish Teacher Educators" (2006) that has been widely distributed internationally and translated also into Japanese and Spanish. Her other edited monograph "Education as a social Contributor" (2007) is currently being translated to Korean.

Her research and professional work in teacher education has been acknowledged in Europe and countries all over the world, and as such has been evidenced by multiple invitations as a keynote lecturer of research conferences as well as advisory roles for the European Commission and OECD. In addition, she has many publications translated in the following languages: English, Swedish, French, Estonia, Hungarian, Slovenian, Spanish, Catalanian, Japanese, and Korean.

Her research on learning and teaching led to new insights to lifelong learning research and thus created an urgent need for interdisciplinary approaches. She was the Scientific Director of a national research program Life as Learning (LEARN 2002-2006) funded by the Academy of Finland and other co-funders.

The program had 23 projects in the following areas: Education, Business and Industry, Information Technology and Knowledge Creation. During the research program, it became evident that there was an urgent need to create a new platform for interdisciplinary research on learning. Initiated by professor Niemi, thus the impetus led to the creation of a national multidisciplinary CICERO Learning Network (Cross-Disciplinary Initiative for Collaborative Efforts of Research on Learning) (www.cicero.fi), which was established at the University of Helsinki in 2005. She has chaired the network since its inception.

She had a great contribution to **IQ Form - The Virtual University project** (2000-2004). The system consists of a large data bank which contains different kinds of instruments of mapping needs of learning and learners on the Web. The instruments are used to evaluate learning profiles and styles - when learning alone or in collaboration. With the help of the system there can be gathered up quantitative and qualitative feedback which can be analyzed e.g. by a Bayesian technique. The system is suitable for tutoring when studying on the Web; it operates as a student's support during his/her studies and gives feedback to teachers, designers and Web material producers already during the course. Guidance given by the **IQ Learn** motivates him/her to develop his/her strengths and learning strategies based on the self-assessment tests.

She was the coordinator of "**LEARNINGSPEACE - Crossboundary European Scenarios on Learning**", The European research project for the development of web based learning environments, 2001-2003

She has been Vice Rector for academic affairs at the University of Helsinki (2003-2008, 2008-2009), Dean of the Faculty of Education (2001-

2003), Head of the Department of Education and Vice-Dean at the University of Helsinki (1998–2000). She has been Professor of Education in Teacher Education Departments of Oulu, Turku and Tampere Universities (1987–1998) and Visiting Scholar at Michigan State University (1989).

She has had many memberships in scientific councils, e.g. the Standing Committee of Social Sciences of the European Science Foundation, the Council for Society and Culture in the Academy of Finland and the Scientific Council of the University of Helsinki. She is an advisor or a reviewer in many scientific journals. She is a board member and vice-chairperson of the Finnish Virtual University. She is also a member of FINHEEC, The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (2004–2007, 2008–2009).

She has contributed in many EU and OECD projects as an expert or researcher. She served as a keynote speaker in several international forums, e.g. in Hungary, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, German, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, England, France and Estonia.

Her main research interest areas are teachers' professional development, moral education and technology-based learning environments. She has published widely articles and books on education in Finland and Finnish teacher education (e.g. *Research-Based Teacher Education in Finland*, 2006 and *Education as a Societal Contributor* 2007) and contributed in many international education research publications (e.g. *Evidence in Education, Linking Research and Policy*, OECD/CERI 2007). She has published in ten languages.

During the past 20 years, she has been a chairperson or a researcher in many national and international evaluation projects for development of educational research and teacher education. Throughout her professional career and extensive in-depth research, Professor Niemi has emphasized values in education. The purpose of education is to empower people and thus engage them to find their pathways in life. Learning is a powerful force, thus it can aid, assist and help different learners to find they own learning strategies and hence, work collaboratively by sharing their experiences. Professor Niemi has chaired the Finland Teachers' Ethical Council since 2000.

Professor Niemi has been nominated as the J.D Koh Professorship (Honorable Professorship) in Singapore October 2010, and has been invited as a member of the Steering Committee of the British Teaching and Learning Research Programme, TLRP (2003-2008) as well as a reviewer or a panelist for research projects and programs: ESRC (U.K.), Estonia, Portugal, Norway and has served as a member of the Standing Committee for Social Sciences at ESF in 1999-2000. She is a past member of Erasmus Mundus Selection Board (2004-2006) and was a panelist for reviewing quality of educational research in Tallinn and Tartu Universities, the University of Jyväskylä and in 2010 invited to Chair of The Quality of Research in the University of Gothenburg.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having in view all these, The University of Bucharest hereby confers today the title of **PROFESOR HONORIS CAUSA** Mrs. Hannele Niemi, in full recognition of her intellectual excellence and in high appreciation both of her rich contribution to the prestige and growth of education and her firm longstanding commitment to the field.