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**Greetings on the opening of the second international online conference
fostering dialogue “Teaching Children’s Literature at University”
17-19 November 2022**

Minister of Culture and Equality

Honoured colleagues, guests and, friends

Welcome to the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and the second international online conference fostering dialogue with the theme **“Teaching Children’s Literature at University”**.

This conference is based on a joint, international initiative arising from the first “Fostering Dialogue” conference held in 2020 by the University of Padova in partnership with the University of Waikato and the University of Arizona.

At the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, education and research in the fields of children’s literature and culture are important subjects, especially on our teacher training programme.

We can approach children’s culture from a variety of perspectives, including the way that children’s culture is perceived and understood by children themselves, as well as the adults around them.

But it also allows us to trace and uncover new knowledge through the exploration of the spaces that we find between and across different disciplines, as well as nations and cultures. This conference is the perfect forum for this type of research.

Over the coming three days, there will be the opportunity for scholarly discussion of current research that is relevant to both the academy and practitioners, as well as the latest research of relevance to education and dissemination.

I urge everyone to participate actively. In the online setting, the fruit of the conference are particularly dependent on the attentiveness of the individual

and their active participation. Thanks to each and every one of you for your attention and time!

Research-based education that is adjacent and relevant to practice is very much central **to our university's profile, focusing on professional and working life**. This is the very foundation of our new, multi-campus university in western Norway. A wide-reaching geographical presence is our great strength, enabling us to serve as an educational institution of particular use to society on the local, national, and international stages.

Cooperation and interaction with public and private sector stakeholders are at the heart of what we do.

These interactions must always be framed by basic academic norms and our scholarly ethos. Our value in society is based on the fact that we manage scholarly methods, research-based knowledge and academic freedom in the best possible way.

In a time characterised by unrest, financial uncertainty, flows of information that have been led astray, and conspiracy theories running amok, it is the higher education sector's duty to defend knowledge and rationality, lay the foundations for good judgment, and to cut through the lies, propaganda, and attempts at manipulation.

It is our mission to pursue the truth and ensure the use of academic methodologies in our research and education. It is our mission to disseminate this knowledge locally, nationally, and internationally. It is our mission to cultivate a culture of expression and to provide our researchers with the framework in which to work safely.

This is how we are working to achieve our vision: Knowledge that shapes people and society.

My thanks to the organising committee and to our magnificent partners who have helped in the arrangements for this conference. And a special warm welcome to the six invited panellists, as well as everyone else who will be sharing their innovative research at the conference.

The Western Norway University of Applied Sciences is proud to be your host and we wish you the best of luck!