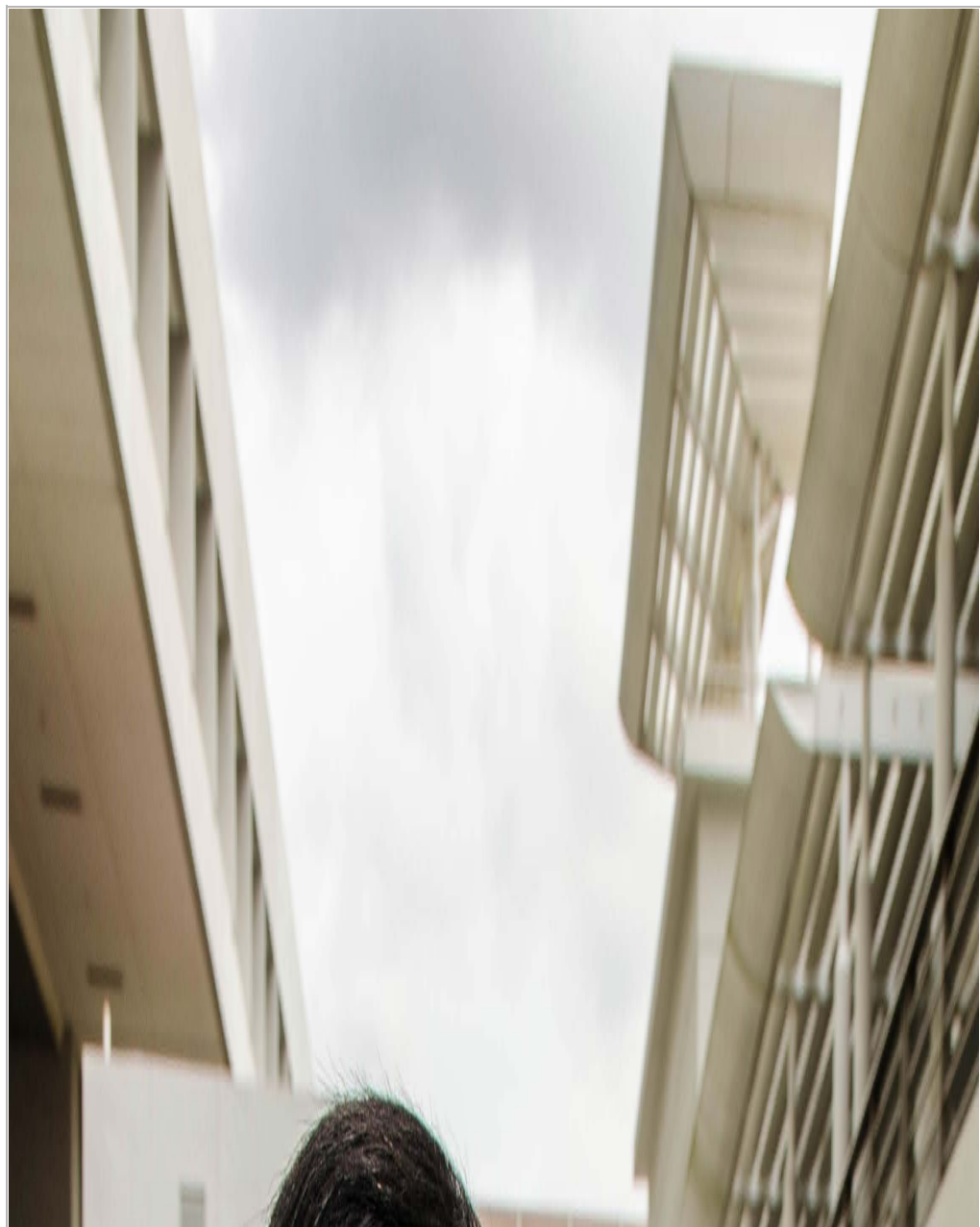


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Student-built satellite by NTU launched

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NTU Assoc Prof Low Kay Soon with the Picosatellite Velox-P11 model

A group of young Singapore student engineers are boldly going where none of their peers have gone before.

The satellite they built is now orbiting in space and all systems are functioning well.

The 1.3 kilogramme VELOX-P2 satellite was launched into space onboard a Russian rocket in 2011, and successfully detached from it last Thursday.

Director of NTU's Satellite Research Centre Professor Low Kay Soon says the satellite contacted its base at NTU on Friday, indicating it's fully operational.

"From Thursday until now, this satellite has been orbiting around Earth for 50 times. Everyday it will pass by Singapore 2 or 3 times in the morning and 2 or 3 times at midnight. We have to send commands out and communicate to the satellite. We monitor the temperature is normal, we look at the battery status and the battery is fully charged. Everything seems to be working well and we are quite happy with it."

Shaped like a cube that measures 10 centimetres on all sides, the VELOX-P2 will test hardware and software built by NTU students to harness solar power for satellites.

"Solar panels actually generate different amount of energy that it can be harvested. So we need to farm softwares for it such that we can extract maximum power."

NTU says the small satellite, costs between 1 to 2 hundred thousand dollars, and represents a cost-effective platform to test new ideas before translating them for commercial uses on big satellites.

Apart from that, the project will train engineers to support Singapore's growing space industry.

The VELOX-P2 is the second satellite from Singapore orbiting in space.

NTU intends to build three other nano-satellites over the next seven years in its 10-year satellite roadmap.

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