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Former Carnegie Mellon Head Subra Suresh Named President of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore

SUNITA SOHRABJI, India-West Staff Reporter



Former Carnegie Mellon University president Subra Suresh (right) is shown here in a conversation with former President Barack Obama. The Indian American academician, who abruptly stepped down from his post at CMU last month, will serve as the president of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, beginning next January. (file photo/courtesy of the White House)

Former Carnegie Mellon University president Subra Suresh, who abruptly stepped down from his post last month, was announced July 12 as the next president of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

“I am excited to have the honor of leading NTU, with its rich history, heritage and beautiful, cosmopolitan campus in a vibrant city state serving as a global hub for finance, commerce, education, research and culture at the crossroads of Asia, at a time when Asia is poised to take a significant leadership role in shaping the 21st century,” said the Indian American academic leader in a press release issued by NTU.

“I look forward to working with the NTU community, including its outstanding faculty and administrative staff, 200,000+ global alumni, trustees, and exceptional students to realize the great opportunities that lie ahead,” he said.

In his resignation letter to CMU faculty and staff June 1, Suresh had hinted at a new post, noting: “Even as we depart for new opportunities, we will always take CMU with us.” He noted that he and his wife Mary had carefully considered CMU’s strategic plan, and felt it would best be served by a new president (see earlier India-West story [here](#)).

Suresh, who joined CMU as its president in 2013, had one of the shortest tenures in CMU’s long history. He will join NTU next January, as current president Bertill Andersson retires from the role he has held since 2011.

NTU, a research-intensive public university, has been ranked the 11th best university in the world and the first in Asia by QS World University Rankings. US News and World Reports ranked NTU at number 82 in its 2017 list of the best universities around the globe, and the fifth best university in Asia. Carnegie Mellon was ranked at 67 by the publication.

Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of the NTU Board of Trustees, announced the appointment of Suresh in a letter to faculty, students, alumni, and staff July 12. Hwee, who also currently serves as the chairman of Agilent Technologies, and is the former chairman of Singapore Airlines and DBS Bank, said the university’s search began last year; the eight-member search committee unanimously selected Suresh.

"Prof. Suresh understands the Singapore higher education and research systems, as well as those in North America, Europe, China and India, having actively engaged with various public and private agencies and boards, and as a member of a number of national academies of science and engineering," said Hwee in his letter.

"He is an educator, scientist, advisor, inventor, entrepreneur and leader all rolled into one. The Board of Trustees and I are delighted that he has agreed to take the top job to lead NTU in its next phase of development," said the chairman.

Hwee noted that while Suresh served as president of CMU, the university built a new quadrangle – the largest building on campus – which was partly funded by a \$67 million gift from an alumnus.

Suresh also created the Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship with a \$31 million gift from another alumnus. He was able to secure \$200 million in new contributions to support the university's Presidential Fellowships and Scholarships Program, which he established in 2014.

Prior to joining CMU, Suresh served as the director of the National Science Foundation. He also served as the dean in the College of Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.