

Professor Bertil Andersson to retire as NTU President

by [Joakim Persson, Managing Editor ScandAsia](#) • July 14, 2017 • [0 Comments](#)

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has announced that its forth President, the Swedish **Professor Bertil Andersson** will retire from the role at the end of 2017.



NTU President Prof Bertil Andersson at the iconic HIVE that supports 'flipped classroom' learning (Credit: NTU Singapore)

Professor Subra Suresh, an eminent American scientist, engineer and entrepreneur chosen in 2010 by then-US President Barack Obama to lead the US National Science Foundation (NSF), will succeed him from 1 January 2018, when Prof Andersson retires from the role he has held since 2011.

Chairman of the **NTU Board of Trustees, Mr Koh Boon Hwee** (Chairman of Agilent Technologies, Inc., former Chairman of both Singapore Airlines and DBS Bank) said that succession planning started last year and in line with international best practices of universities, NTU had conducted a global search for its next president in Singapore and internationally. The eight-member search committee chaired by Mr Koh unanimously selected Prof Suresh for the top role at NTU, and his appointment has been strongly endorsed by all members of the NTU Board of Trustees.

Prof Suresh joins NTU from **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)** where he was President for the last four years. Carnegie Mellon has been credited for its contribution to the transformation of the city of Pittsburgh from primarily a steel producer to a diverse economy through advances in technology, services and medicine.

At Carnegie Mellon, Prof Suresh launched a historic campus infrastructure development effort including the creation of a new quadrangle to house the largest building on campus partly funded by a US\$67 million gift from an alumnus.

“NTU has made phenomenal progress under Prof Andersson’s leadership as a university that develops well-rounded graduates and produces globally recognised research. The appointment of the next President is crucial to continue that momentum and to elevate NTU in its next significant phase of growth and development. A world-class university, NTU will need a leader with vision, global stature, a thorough understanding of the environment in which it operates, and the larger international backdrop that the university and Singapore fit into. Prof Suresh more than matches all these criteria,” said Mr Koh.



Prof Subra Suresh (Courtesy of Sandy Schaeffer)

He continued: “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. 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.”

NTU Singapore is one of the world’s leading universities recognised by several independent global academic ranking organisations and metrics. In its QS World University Rankings this year, the Quacquarelli Symonds group placed NTU 11th in the world and the best in Asia. In 2017 NTU was again placed the world’s best young university (under 50 years old) by QS for the fourth consecutive year. It was also named the world’s fastest rising young university by Times Higher Education in 2015. NTU’s campus is frequently named among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world.

“I have had a very special affinity for Singapore and numerous interactions with colleagues here in academia, industry and government. It has been a privilege to witness and also participate in the impressive rise of both Singapore and NTU on the international stage,” Prof Suresh commented his new role.

“I am excited to have the honour 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. 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 realise the great opportunities that lie ahead. I am also grateful to Prof Andersson for his very impactful leadership of NTU for the past six years.”

Prof Suresh has had numerous high-level interactions with Singapore for nearly a quarter century. He has served as a consultant to the National Science and Technology Board, on the Advisory Boards or Councils of **A*STAR** Institutes and several schools at the National University of Singapore. He held the inaugural Tan Chin Tuan Centennial Chair for visiting appointments at the National University of Singapore from 2006 to 2010.

Prof Suresh was the principal faculty coordinator from MIT for the formation of the **Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART)** centre in 2006. SMART is the first centre in the **National Research Foundation’s** Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE).

While serving as Dean of Engineering at MIT, Prof Suresh continued his scholarly work in partnership with colleagues from NUS and NTU in the first SMART centre programme on infectious diseases, which led to several dozen research articles in leading international journals.

For the past several years, he has served as a member of both the Academic Research Council and the International Academic Advisory Panel of Singapore’s Ministry of Education.



“I warmly welcome Prof Suresh and hope that he will enjoy his time here as NTU President as much as I have. It has been a great honour and I have many special memories of my 10 years in this remarkable place. I know the future leadership of NTU is in safe hands and I look forward to working with Prof Suresh and the NTU Board of Trustees to ensure a smooth transition. Wherever I am in the world in the future, I will continue to be a proud ambassador of NTU and Singapore,” Professor Andersson said.

Prof Andersson, an eminent biochemist and winner of the prestigious Wilhelm Exner Medal has worked in Singapore for over 10 years. He joined NTU in 2007 as its first Provost and was appointed President in 2011. Under his leadership, NTU jumped from 74th position in 2010 to an all-time high of No. 11 globally to be the highest placed Asian university in the QS World University Rankings this year.

NTU now leads the top Asian universities in normalised research citation impact (Clarivate Analytics' InCites 2015), and in the last five years, NTU has established joint labs on its campus with leading international organisations such as **Rolls Royce, BMW, Siemens, Johnson Matthey, Lockheed Martin** and Singapore's **ST Engineering**.

A fellow of Imperial College London, Prof Andersson, spearheaded the establishment of NTU's joint medical school with Imperial College, whose first batch of medical students will graduate in July 2018. He was recognised by the President of Singapore with the 2016 President's Science and Technology Medal and has advanced education practices through the 'flipped classroom' pedagogical approach exemplified through NTU's iconic Hive building, and through an emphasis on continual lifelong education.

Prof Andersson has also overseen the rapid physical transformation of the NTU main campus and the development of a second clinical medicine campus at Novena, providing a conducive environment for education, research and inter-disciplinary interactions.