

NTU launches elite professorship scheme

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) yesterday launched a prestigious professorship scheme in a bid to attract more top academic talent from around the globe.

NTU's Distinguished University Professorship will be awarded to senior academics whose research typically cuts across multiple disciplines, and who have distinguished themselves internationally.

Professor Subra Suresh, NTU's president-designate, will be the first to receive the new professorship. It is expected there will be no more than 12 such distinguished professors at any given time.

Prof Suresh, 61, is taking over from current NTU president Bertil Andersson next year. He is a leading American scientist handpicked

by former president Barack Obama to helm the National Science Foundation in the United States, and holds the distinction of being the only university president elected to all three US national academies – of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and is one of the few elected foreign members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The distinguished professors will be awarded an annual research fund, and its size will depend on the nature, scope and field of their scholarly work, and reviewed every five years. Details on the potential size of this fund are not available.

The professors will be encouraged to present lectures and supervise students or post-doctoral fellows at NTU.

Open calls for nominees for the professorship will be held periodically, and the nomination and selection process will be overseen by the NTU provost. Nominees need not be faculty who are currently employed by NTU.

For example, former US president Jimmy Carter, a distinguished university professor at Emory University in the US, conducts an annual town hall with first-year students and speaks at selected university events.

NTU Board of Trustees chairman Koh Boon Hwee said the new professorship “will serve as a new mechanism to attract and retain top-calibre professors at NTU”.

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