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# NTU inaugurates fourth president; to launch institute studying impact of technology on society



NTU's fourth president, Professor Subra Suresh, receiving his certificate of appointment from Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung. ST PHOTO: FABIAN KOH

[Fabian Koh](#)

SINGAPORE - A new institute will be set up to study the impact of technology on society in the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The NTU Institute of Science and Technology for Humanity, to be set up "in the next few months", will focus on the impact of the

technological revolution on urban Asia, said NTU President Professor Subra Suresh.

Prof Suresh was speaking to 2,000 people at his inauguration ceremony in NTU's Nanyang Auditorium on Thursday (Feb 22). He commenced his term as the fourth president of the university on Jan 1.

"While the technological revolution we are witnessing today will reshape the 21st century human condition in many ways, there is also understandable nervousness about its potential downsides," he said.

The new institute will focus on the ethical implications of innovations, governance in this technological age, and how technology is affecting the lives of people in Asia - the world's most populous continent.

"We have already identified and confirmed several members of the inaugural governing board of the institute, and will be announcing the full group of advisors to the institute within the next few months," said Prof Suresh, adding that the global team will include several members from Singapore.

At the event, Prof Suresh was also conferred the title of Distinguished University Professor, NTU's highest academic appointment. He received a certificate of appointment from Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung.

Prof Suresh outlined his aims in his speech, which include upholding NTU's position as a test bed for innovation in support of Singapore's efforts to become a Smart Nation, and cultivating the university as a global leader in dealing with social changes arising from technological changes.

In his inauguration address, he spoke about his own education journey in India where neither of his parents could attend university.

He also shared how his studies in the United States were made possible through sacrifices by his family, and scholarships awarded based on merit regardless of personal background.

"My journey over the past several decades has revealed to me how the policies and practices of institutions and governments can have a profound effect on the lives and careers of individual citizens," he said.

Prof Suresh also announced the launch of the Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship that will start this year, to attract researchers to the university to begin their careers in academia. It will fund 12 people each year.

Targeted at PhD holders with no more than five years of full-time postdoctoral experience, it will include a two-year tenure with an \$80,000 annual salary, a \$100,000 yearly research grant, and a housing and relocation grant.

Those interested can apply at [www.ntu.edu.sg/ppf](http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ppf) from now until April 5 midnight (Singapore time).

NTU will also be launching an NTU Digital Arts Prize this year to "recognise global artists and technologists with extraordinary creativity".

It will be awarded once every two years and will be open to global competition, with the winner selected from a panel of judges from around the world. There will be prize money to the tune of "tens of thousands of dollars", according to Prof Suresh.

Explaining the emphasis on arts, he said: "One cannot be a complete human without an appreciation of the arts. And I'm speaking as an engineer."