

Dear Colleagues and Students,

I have had the privilege of working closely with you, the NTU community, since my appointment as NTU President was announced nearly five years ago in July 2017. Working in close partnership with our OneNTU community to build the University's portfolio of impressive accomplishments has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my professional life. Together we have witnessed the results of our collective effort as NTU has continued its extraordinary climb in its local and international stature.

However, I am writing today to let you know that, given the University's strong momentum and standing at this time, I plan to step down as president at the end of this calendar year.

As you are aware, about a year ago, I agreed to the offer from the NTU Board of Trustees to extend my role as President beyond my initial term to accelerate the University's rapid growth, and further the ambitious goals of our strategic plan, NTU 2025.

But the lingering effects of a global pandemic have precluded my immediate and close-knit family, like so many others separated across continents, from coming together over a protracted time, even for significant family life events. The much-anticipated recent news of the arrival of our first grandchild later this year and a strong desire to be in closer geographical proximity as a family have convinced my wife Mary and me to return to the United States sooner than we had originally envisioned.

I am very proud of how all of us at NTU worked together to keep our campus and our people safe and secure during the past two years of life with the pandemic, while continuing to excel in our mission to propel NTU into the top echelons of academic institutions. I will leave knowing that NTU is a global leader taking its rightful place among the top Universities of the world. Together we have strengthened NTU's foundation which my successor will be able to build on. At this time of reflection, there have been so many accomplishments by all of you, our faculty, staff, students, and our leadership team, during the past few years in which I take great pride:

- **NTU's research volume** has seen significant growth, setting a new annual record in each of the past several years. This reflects the very high quality of the scholarly work of NTU researchers as these funding decisions typically follow independent international peer review of the quality of research proposals. In the past few years, the number of all **publications** by NTU faculty in **top research journals** across fields has doubled.
- The University launched an **Interdisciplinary Common Core curriculum** and **internship** opportunities, the first-of-its-kind in Singapore, for all undergraduate students in August 2021 as part of the NTU 2025 Strategic Plan to improve our teaching outcomes and to prepare our students for lifelong learning. The FlexiMasters programme for **continuing education** at the Master's degree level, launched in 2020, has already grown

to more than 35 curricular offerings from all parts of the University. The **NTU Priorities Fund** created in 2020 with private philanthropy from our community helped hundreds of students in financial need during the pandemic. NTU's first **interdisciplinary School** across the Colleges of Engineering and Science will be established this year.

- Our international reputation is increasingly well-recognised. Up to 11 NTU **academic subjects are now placed among the top ten** in the world, with up to four **subjects considered the best globally**, highlighting a significant ascent in NTU's intellectual stature. As a young university, the impressive climb of NTU has now placed it within the top 50 in the world in all three major global assessments, for the first time in its history. NTU has also emerged as a global top young university for seven years in a row by one key international measure. Indeed, the UK government has recognised these achievements and announced, just last week, that NTU graduates will be among those selective cohorts from the top universities in the world to receive a special visa to seek employment in the UK.
- The growing reputation of NTU has been clearly reflected in our ability to **attract talent** from Singapore and leading universities around the world, with more than 350 faculty members recruited just in the past four years (even during the pandemic), including new Distinguished University Professors and senior leadership team members from prestigious universities. The **Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows Programme**, launched in 2018, has now become the most competitive young talent attraction scheme at NTU, with more than 1,050 applications for only 12 positions even during the height of the pandemic in 2020.
- NTU took a decisive step in its commitment to be a leader in environmental sustainability, and to demonstrate at scale how we build on our education and research activities to effect long-lasting change on our own Smart Campus and for the planet. In October 2021, NTU released the **Sustainability Manifesto** with a pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. It also became the first university in the world to issue sustainability-linked public bonds.
- These academic achievements and ambitions have been underpinned by important governance and administrative successes, to build a robust, sustainable and secure future for NTU. The deliberate measures we introduced in 2018 have guided the University to **financial sustainability** while preserving our reserves for the rainy day. In its first ever credit rating exercise, NTU received Aaa credit rating from Moody's, with "stable outlook", in October 2021. Our strategic investments in **cloud-based digital technologies** have enabled us to accelerate our migration to online learning while nurturing new teaching and learning innovations during and beyond the pandemic.
- And our infrastructure for future achievements that benefit industry and society has also been developed: major new **Corporate and Joint Laboratories** have been established at NTU in the past four years including those with HP Inc., Continental, Schaeffler, GLOBALFOUNDRIES, and Surbana Jurong. A new S\$94-million Research Centre of Excellence, the Institute for Digital Molecular Analytics and Science, and the S\$40-million Waste-to-Energy facility were established in the last three years. The scope and scale of

NTU's innovation and NTUitive's impact in **nurturing startups** have also expanded significantly.

This letter comes with a big 'thank you' to each one of you – the faculty, staff and students with whom I have had the privilege to interact. None of this could have happened without your engagement, commitment and support. I give special thanks to my close leadership team: the current and former members of the core and extended President's Council including the VPs, deans, administrative heads, School Chairs, and Faculty Senate members, as well as current and former members of the Board of Trustees. Their contributions, together with the strong support over the years from the Singapore government agencies, mean that the future success of NTU will be assured. I owe personal thanks to so many people and I look forward to reaching out to them in due course. For now, I express my deep gratitude particularly to Prof Ling San, Prof Lam Khin Yong, Ms Tan Aik Na, Ms Loretta Cruz, Ms Loreen Tan, and Ms Huei Ashley E. Lee for all their dedication and hard work and for giving me their unstinting support.

I know that NTU will go from strength to strength with all your effort - enhancing the University's activities in learning, knowledge creation and dissemination, talent development, innovation, and service to Singapore and humanity. I know this because you, alongside our more than 250,000 alumni in over 150 countries, will fly the NTU flag high.

I plan to continue to work hard during the remainder of my term as President to further the goals of NTU 2025. I have been and continue to be deeply appreciative of the opportunity to have served as NTU's President. NTU is a very special place because you make it so. It has been a privilege to be a part of your success.

With my warm wishes and appreciation,

Subra Suresh

President and Inaugural Distinguished University Professor