

# NTU president to step down

Dr Su leaves important legacy after 8 years at the helm; he will stay on as professor

By JANE NG

NANYANG Technological University (NTU) president Su Guanqing, 60, will step down in June next year, after being at the helm for eight years.

He will be succeeded by the university's provost, Professor Bertil Andersson, 61. The new provost will be Professor Freddy Boey, 54, who currently heads the school of materials science and engineering.

Dr Su, who is credited with overseeing NTU's smooth transition to an autonomous university, had previously indicated his intention to step down after his term ends on June 30. Formally announcing his decision yesterday, the respected scholar said it was time to pass on the baton in the "marathon relay" of building a world-class university.

"It will be difficult for me to put down a burden that has also been a joy and a source of energy over the last eight years. But renewal is a crucial stage in the life cycle of universities," he said in a statement.

Dr Su, a President's Scholar and former chief of the Defence Science and Technology Agency, will stay on as a professor in the school of electrical and electronic engineering. He is leaving behind an important legacy, which included expanding the university's curriculum beyond engineering and science, and strengthening its ties with China.

Under his charge, NTU set up the school of humanities and social sciences, the school of physical and mathematical sciences, and the school of art, design and media. A fourth new school was later set up - the school of chemical and biomedical engineering - expanding NTU's engineering offerings before the establishment of a new medical school.

Externally, he developed strong relations with China, introducing executive programmes, including the famed "Mayors' Class" under which officials from China are trained in public administration. Today, NTU has 15,000 alumni across 16 provinces in China.

In a statement yesterday, Education Minister Ng Eng Hen lauded Dr Su for transforming NTU from "a teaching university focused on engineering into a university with strengths in education and research".

"As president, Dr Su worked tirelessly to strengthen the international standing of NTU, and forged strategic alliances with top technological universities worldwide," he said.

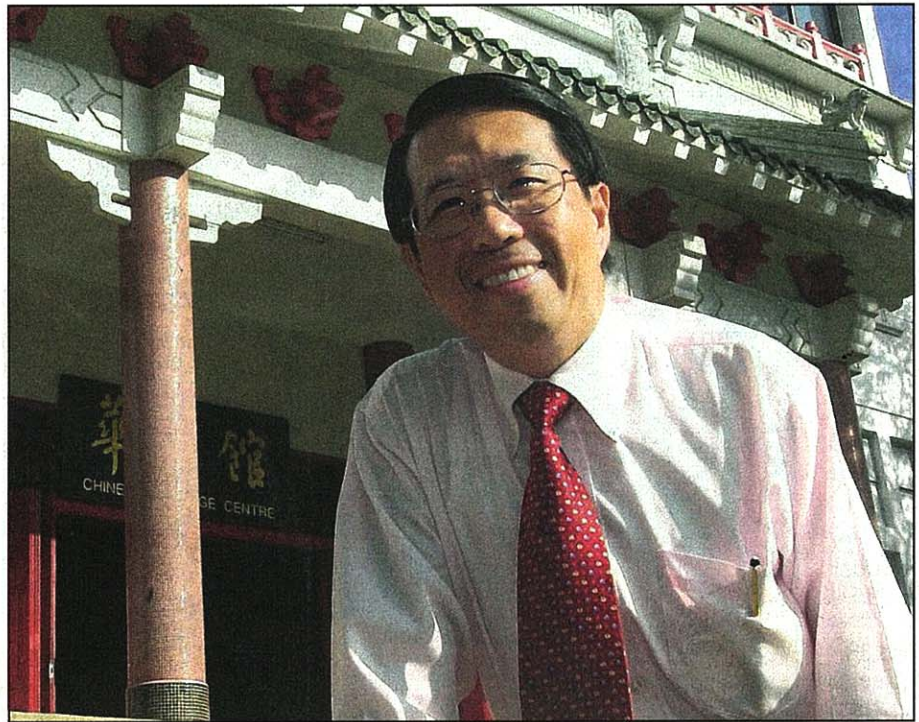
Echoing his sentiments, Mr Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of the NTU Board of Trustees, said the university board is planning to appoint Dr Su president emeritus in recognition of his contributions.

For his peers and colleagues, Dr Su was an approachable boss who valued and respected their views. Mr Chew Kheng Chuan, chief university advancement officer who oversees the development, alumni and corporate communications offices, describes him as an "excellent boss".

Said Mr Chew: "He's not a micromanager, he's always very encouraging and very clear about what he wants me to do, then he'd get out of my way and allow me to do my job."

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See Home Page B1



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## A BURDEN AND A JOY

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Dr Su Guanqing (above) on passing the baton to Prof Bertil Andersson (left)

## New chief's Nobel links

PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Bertil Andersson, 61, is a world-renowned plant biochemist.

Since he arrived at NTU three years ago to take up the post of provost, he has been instrumental in redefining NTU's education and research by training its focus on science and engineering.

Concurrently a visiting professor and fellow at Imperial College London, he played a key role in setting up NTU's medical school in collaboration with Imperial College. The new medical school will admit its first intake in 2013.

He was educated at Umea and Lund Universities in Sweden. His research career began at Umea, where he later became professor of biochemistry.

From 1996 to 2003, he was dean of the Faculty of Chemical Sciences at the University of Stockholm; he was also president of Sweden's Linkoping University from 1999 to 2003. His last post before coming here was as the chief executive of the European Science Foundation.

His links to the Nobel Foundation have given him a contact base among top scientists, who will "have a positive influence on the work we do at NTU", he said. He still sits on the foundation's board of trustees.

He will stay on the "accelerated path" on which his predecessor Su Guanqing put NTU. "Internationally, NTU is seen as one of the fastest growing universities in the world and we'll continue in this direction," he said.

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