

Eminent Hong Kong professor & SARS 'hero' Joseph Sung to move to S'pore to head NTU medical school

He hopes to bring greater academic collaboration between the two cities.

Kayla Wong | August 12, 2020, 03:48 AM



Joseph Sung, the former president of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), is set to leave Hong Kong to head the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine in Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

He will also be Senior Vice President (Health and Life Sciences) at NTU.

SARS hero

Sung, whom *Time* magazine called an "Asian hero" for his role in fighting the 2003 SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, made the [announcement](#) on his personal Facebook page.

The 60-year-old gastroenterologist said the move to Singapore will take place in March 2021.

Sung, who was President of CUHK from 2010 to 2017, wrote a post in English announcing his move as well:



Alvin Lum  @alvinllum · Aug 11, 2020



Replying to @alvinllum

NTU confirmed Sung's decision as medical schools' dean as well as NTU's senior vice president, effective from 1 April 2021.

media.ntu.edu.sg/NewsReleases/P...



Alvin Lum 

@alvinllum

Joseph Sung's farewell note on Facebook in English, where he described it's a decision with "sadness and excitement".

Moving to Singapore

My friends,

It is with sadness and excitement that I disclose my plan to you... that I will be taking up a new job at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore as Dean of Medicine and Senior Vice President starting March 2021, turning a new page in my life.

My sadness arises from my long-time association with the medical profession and academics in the Chinese University of HK, and now I have to say goodbye to all my friends at home, Hong Kong. I do not consider myself leaving Hong Kong as my family and my mother are still living here. Singapore is only three hours away by flight and I have asked my wife to save some dinner for me. My excitement stems from having this great opportunity to help developing a young medical school and coordinating life science research in a vibrant university, top institute not only in Asia, but also in the global league. Artificial intelligence and Healthcare is my vision and passion. NTU is a good platform to develop this field. As research and education have always been my love, I thank God for this wonderful opportunity to complete my career circle.

I want to say to all my colleagues in Hong Kong that I am so proud of you. Hong Kong has a world-renowned team of healthcare workers who are praised for their high professional standard, selfless service and resilient attitude. You have led us through many crisis including SARS in 2003, and I am sure, the current COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you and please take good care of yourselves. I have to bid farewell to my friends in academia. I am not playing as your competitor team. On the contrary, I hope my move can help to bring Hong Kong and Singapore closer in academic collaborations. Our higher education in Hong Kong and Singapore has a lot of similarities, but at the same time, we are unique in many ways. Let us capitalize on our strengths and tighten our relationships, working for the betterment of mankind.

To my friends in Prince of Wales Hospital and Faculty of Medicine, my colleagues and students at CUHK, my brothers and sisters at churches and all my friends in Hong Kong, thank you for your trust and support all these years. I cherish every precious moment that we had together. Albeit we might seem to be far apart, we are just a phone call and WhatsApp away. Don't be surprised next time when you see me on a jogging trail in Hong Kong. I will be here very often.

5:00 PM · Aug 11, 2020



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See Alvin Lum's other Tweets

In his post, Sung said NTU is "a good platform" to develop the fields of artificial intelligence and healthcare, which he said are his "vision and passion".

Describing his move as a "wonderful opportunity to complete [his] career circle", Sung said he is both sad and excited about it.

Sung also downplayed the rivalry between Hong Kong and Singapore, saying he will not be playing as the "competitor team" to his friends in academia back in Hong Kong.

He added that he hopes to bring greater academic collaboration between the two cities.

Sung also said he does not consider himself to be leaving Hong Kong as his family and mother are still living there, adding that the city will always be his beloved home.

Starting his tenure on April 1, 2021

NTU said in a [statement](#) on Aug. 11 that Sung will formally begin his tenure at the university on April 1, 2021.

Referring to Sung as an "internationally renowned clinician-scientist and academic leader", NTU said he will be succeeding professor James Best, who held the position for nearly seven years.

Best said he looked forward to passing the mantle to Sung, saying Sung's "distinguished international career has earned him respect and accolades as a visionary academic leader".

NTU President Subra Suresh also said the school is "delighted" that Sung will be leading the next chapter of development, adding that he looks forward to working with Sung to drive NTU's aspirations in health, medicine and life sciences.