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Contributed by Kow Kwan Yee, Rahimy Rahim and A. Raman

NTU professor is world's best in business teaching

Poon Chian Hui | The Straits Times | Mon Mar 18 2013



AN INFORMATION systems expert from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has been named the world's best business educator.

Professor Vijay Sethi, 52, beat three other finalists in a "teach-off" two days ago in London for the top prize, given out by the business research group, the Economist Intelligence Unit.

He was judged to have delivered the best lecture in 35 minutes to a live classroom audience comprising undergraduate and graduate business students who later voted him the winner.

The other finalists were from Canadian universities HEC Montreal and the University of British Columbia, and the Insead school from France.

They were picked from a pool of 222 professors from 31 countries by a panel of judges helmed by The Economist's business education editor William Ridgers. The professors were nominated by students and members of school alumni.

Prof Sethi walked away with the title of Business Professor of the Year and prize money of US\$100,000 (\$125,000). Said NTU president Bertil Andersson: "Vijay took on some of the best teachers in the world and came out tops. He has done both NTU and Singapore proud."

The head of the judging panel, Mr Ridgers, said Prof Sethi was "clearly a very worthy winner".

"He took some complicated ideas and made them accessible and engaging to the audience."

The winning lecture was on digital networks and the dynamics of network-based industries.

The win comes on the back of a local teaching award given to him on Tuesday, NTU's Nanyang Award for Excellence. At NTU, he teaches e-business and technological entrepreneurship to master's students, and information technology management to undergraduates.

Nanyang Business School interim dean Gillian Yeo described Prof Sethi as "an inspiration to students". His classes are said to be popular, with group discussions that stimulate creative thinking.

Prof Sethi, a Singapore permanent resident from India who holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, said his primary aim is to help students become knowledgeable about the field.

"Ultimately, I want them to be passionate about learning and knowing whatever

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field they want to go into," he said. "If they feel we are passionate about our field, they will be about theirs."

His specialisation includes strategic information systems planning and information technology productivity. He also does research.

Said Prof Sethi: "Through teaching, we improve peoples' minds - the greatest gift we have. We are all what we are today because someone taught us."

"Teaching is my way of giving back," he added.

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