

NTU board chairman Koh Boon Hwee to step down after 28 years

NAC chair Goh Swee Chen, who is also on uni's board of trustees, will take over the role

Goh Yan Han

Mr Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) board of trustees, will be stepping down on March 31, said the university on Tuesday.

Mr Koh, who held the post for 28 years – longer than any other university chairman here – will be succeeded by National Arts Council (NAC) chairman Goh Swee Chen.

Ms Goh is also chairman of the Institute for Human Resource Profes-

sionals and president of Global Compact Network Singapore.

Mr Koh oversaw various changes and milestones at NTU over his long tenure as chairman, including the establishment of the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine in 2013 and the university's ascension in international university rankings.

Since 2015, NTU has been ranked 11th to 13th in the QS World University Rankings, a leap from its 74th place on the same list in 2010.

Mr Koh also made efforts in growing the university's philanthropy support and personally

gave \$2.5 million to NTU in 2010.

The Government matched the sum dollar for dollar, and the money was used to establish a \$5 million endowment fund in support of the University Scholars Award, which NTU later renamed the Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award in recognition of Mr Koh's generosity.

Before he took on the role of NTU chairman, he had made waves in the private sector as chairman of Singtel, Singapore Airlines and DBS Bank.

A prominent businessman and veteran technology investor, he is currently also chairman of Altara Partners, RippleDor Capital, Sunningdale Tech and Agile Techologies, among others.

When Mr Koh became NTU chair-



Mr Koh Boon Hwee oversaw various milestones at Nanyang Technological University as chairman, and will be succeeded by Ms Goh Swee Chen.

man in 1993, the university had only six schools – three for engineering and one each for business, applied science and communications – and the National Institute of Education.

Today, it has 15 schools in five

academic colleges, more than 50 research centres, five autonomous institutes and three campuses in Jurong, Novena and one-north.

Mr Koh also supported NTU in its shift towards being more research-intensive, digitalising its lessons, and creating more efficient and advanced administration systems.

"The work is not yet complete, but having started on the greater adoption of digital technologies years before, it facilitated the university's move quickly into online learning, e-exams, virtual meetings and virtual events, and kept the NTU community safe during the Covid-19 pandemic," Mr Koh said.

Education Minister Lawrence Wong thanked Mr Koh for his many years of dedicated service to

NTU. He said: "He has steered NTU through major milestones such as its formation in the 1990s and its transition to become an autonomous university in 2006.

"Under his visionary leadership, NTU has grown into a world-class institution with high standards in education."

Ms Goh said that she was honoured to be taking over the role from Mr Koh.

"He has done an extraordinary job in stewardship and steering the development of the NTU in the last three decades, alongside the trustees and the various NTU leadership teams," she said.

Ms Goh joined the NTU board of trustees in August 2019 and currently sits on the boards of CapitaLand, Singapore Airlines, SP Group and Woodside Energy Ltd (Australia). She retired from the role of chairman of Shell Companies in Singapore in January 2019.

NTU president Subra Suresh said that the university was excited about welcoming Ms Goh to her new role, with her extensive global experience in diverse fields in the business and social sectors.

gyanhan@sph.com.sg