

NUS president to rejoin MOH, global search on for successor

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Toh Wen Li

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is expected to get a new president by next year.

According to a message sent to staff yesterday from the chairman of the NUS board of trustees, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan will next year take up a senior position in the Ministry of Health (MOH), where he had served as director of medical

services from 2000 to 2004.

“Chorh Chuan’s many contributions to NUS are deeply appreciated, and the board will be working closely with him to ensure a smooth and effective transition,” wrote NUS chairman Hsieh Fu Hua, who himself took over last month.

“We are also very grateful for Chorh Chuan’s kind assurance that he would continue to lead NUS with undiminished energy, passion and commitment till he hands over to

the new president.”

NUS confirmed these details last night, adding that a committee is now embarking on a global search for a suitable replacement.

Prof Tan has been leading Singapore’s oldest and largest university since December 2008 when, at the age of 49, he took over from Prof Shih Choon Fong.

Prof Tan had served as NUS’ provost and deputy president from 2004, before being made senior

deputy president in 2007, when he took charge of the university’s strategic plans and its budgets.

A kidney specialist, he joined NUS as a lecturer in the Department of Medicine in 1987 and became the university’s youngest dean at the age of 38 in 1997.

He received the Public Service Star award in 2003 for his role in leading the public health response to the Sars crisis in Singapore.

Under his leadership, NUS has

seen itself rise in international standing. In the latest Times Higher Education World University Rankings released last September, one of the most watched university league tables, NUS was placed 24th, up two positions from the previous year.

It was also the top Asian university for the second year running and the only one from Asia in the world’s top 25 universities.

tohwenli@sph.com.sg